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ABSTRACT

The six articles in this issue attempt to answer questions that have arisen due to the increase in programs that cross existing or traditional age barriers in literacy education. They draw upon recent and current research and practice both in the United Kingdom and the United States. "Family Literacy: An Intergenerational Approach to Education" (Sharon Darling) describes and comments on some current models for family literacy programs in the United States. "Intergenerational Literacy Intervention: Possibilities and Problems" (Peter Hannon) starts from research into school reading attainment and offers a framework for parental involvement in reading acquisition. "Workforce Education, Family Literacy, and Economic Development" (Thomas Sticht) places family literacy in the context of the needs of the work force and examines the interrelationship of literacy acquisition in these different areas. "Parent Involvement in Family Literacy: An Anti-Poverty Perspective" (Ray Phillips) traces the development of parent involvement initiatives against the background of broader social and policy change in the British/European context. "Techniques in Family Literacy" (Keith Topping) looks at specific techniques for parental intervention in basic skills acquisition by children, including paired reading, cued spelling, and paired writing. "A Typology of Family and Intergenerational Literacy Programmes: Implications for Evaluation" (Ruth Nickse) explores issues of evaluation by seeking to establish a typology of family literacy programs. (YLB)

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Viewpoints

A Series Of Occasional Papers On Basic Education

15. Family Literacy

FAMILY LITERACY: AN INTERGENERATIONAL APPROACH TO EDUCATION
• *Sharon Darling*

INTERGENERATIONAL LITERACY INTERVENTION: POSSIBILITIES AND PROBLEMS
• *Peter Hannon*

WORKFORCE EDUCATION, FAMILY LITERACY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
• *Thomas G Sticht*

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN FAMILY LITERACY: AN ANTI-POVERTY PERSPECTIVE
• *Ray Phillips*

TECHNIQUES IN FAMILY LITERACY
• *Keith Topping*

A TYPOLOGY OF FAMILY AND INTERGENERATIONAL LITERACY PROGRAMMES: IMPLICATIONS FOR EVALUATION
• *Ruth S Nickse*

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Viewpoints

A Series Of Occasional Papers On Basic Education

15. Family Literacy

Introduction

As concern continues about 'adequate' levels of basic skills in Western society, the respective roles of educational institutions and the roles and responsibilities of parents are being questioned. There is considerable interest and debate about the achievement of literacy at an early age and the various factors that influence it. Significant levels of adult basic skills needs remain and the interrelationship of improved basic skills among adults and acquisition of basic literacy among children is being explored more closely. Against this setting it is important to look at what strategies and practice have been developed. The increase in programmes that cross existing or traditional age barriers raises a number of issues: Who are the programmes aimed at? Who gains most benefit? How is this best done? How should the effectiveness of such programmes be judged?

The articles in this issue of *Viewpoints* start to provide some of the answers to these questions. They draw upon recent and current research and practice both in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. In the first article Sharon Darling describes and comments on some of the current models for family literacy programmes in the US. Peter Hannon's contribution starts from research into school reading attainment and offers a framework for parental involvement in reading acquisition. Tom Sticht places family literacy in the context of the needs of the workforce and examines the interrelationship of literacy acquisition in these different areas. In the British/European context, Ray Phillips traces the development of parent involvement initiatives against the background of broader social and policy change. In particular the link between basic skills needs and anti-poverty strategies is explored. Keith Topping looks in some detail at specific techniques for parental intervention in basic skills acquisition by children, including paired reading, cued spelling and paired writing. Finally, Ruth Nickse explores issues of evaluation by seeking to establish a typology of family literacy programmes.

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The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors alone and are not necessarily shared by their employers or the Adult Literacy & Basic Skills Unit.

Family literacy: an intergenerational approach to education

Sharon Darling

Sharon Darling has worked in the field of adult education for over twenty years and has served as an education consultant to governors and public policymakers throughout the United States. Sharon Darling has served on numerous boards and currently is Vice Chair of the Board of Directors for the National Institute for Literacy, a board member of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, the National Coalition for Literacy, and the Board of Visitors for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In addition to her professional responsibilities, she participates in many community organisations and agencies including as a Director to the Louisville area Chamber of Commerce, as a member of the Kentucky Women's Forum and as a board member of the Louisville Community Foundation.

In the face of what appears to be an overwhelming agenda of staggering complex social, educational and economic problems, we Americans are often tempted to view new solutions with a jaundiced eye. We have heard endlessly about the crisis in the classroom, the extent of adult illiteracy, and the skill deficits of the workforce. A variety of approaches have been tried, based on expert opinion, research findings, and common sense. Education, social services, private volunteer organisations, and business and industry have also attempted to address the problem. And what about all those programmes we've supported, all those school reforms implemented in the 1980s? Surely, we have tried it all, and yet our efforts do not seem to keep pace with the rate of change in our society. These attempts have not prevented problems from growing faster than we can begin to address them.

The National Centre for Family Literacy was established to attack some of the pervasive problems in education by looking beyond the schoolhouse walls to target the most powerful educational institution – the family. The NCFL is an advocate for policy changes and legislative initiatives that focus on families and NCFL conducts training seminars for over 5000 teachers and community leaders each year to help them establish programmes aimed at breaking the cycle of illiteracy. NCFL now has trained staff of programmes in each of the 50 states and the outcomes of those programme participants make a convincing case for family literacy, as a powerful intervention that is a critical ingredient for education reform and the broader economic and social agenda of the next decade.

Why is **family literacy** a better solution to the persistent educational problems of the United States? Perhaps because it proposes a comprehensive strategy which attempts to get at the root of school failure and undereducation. Family literacy holds the key to two frustrating educational problems which have stubbornly resisted recent reform efforts. Most observers agree that these problem areas are critical for America's future. Too many American adults are unable to cope with the increased level of literacy skills demanded by our rapidly changing world and consequently cannot find employment, if working are unable to progress on the job, and do not have the skills to build our communities. We must get serious about the critical needs of undereducated adults to solve our immediate social and economic woes. But we must also address the issue of prevention for our future adult workers and citizens. We must do a better job of educating our children – increasing the success rate while decreasing the dropout rate, especially for those most at risk. Family literacy programmes recognise that these two groups – undereducated adults and educationally "at risk children" – interlock: they are bound so tightly together that excellence in public school education is an empty dream for youths who go home each afternoon to families where literacy is neither practiced nor valued. Literacy and the value of education are intergenerational and the messages about education transmitted in the home are critical to the future success of children.

This is why family literacy programmes focus on parents and children simultaneously, providing both adult basic skills training and early childhood education. The comprehensive family literacy programme model also acknowledges that through their attitudes, parents convey a critical message about schooling, the work and joy of learning, and the connection between education and quality of life. This is why the programme design includes blocks of time for intergenerational activities, discussion of parenting issues, and a time for parents to become involved in the school setting as volunteers. These basic components – education for parents and children, combined with regular interaction and parent support – comprise a powerful, family-focused intervention.

The Kenan Model

One highly successful programme of this comprehensive type is the Kenan Model, named for

the William R. Kenan, Jr., Charitable Trust which has helped spread the model throughout the nation. Thousands of families are participating in Kenan programmes, whose primary goal is to break the intergenerational cycle of undereducation by improving parents' skills and attitudes toward education, developing children's skills, and uniting parents and children in a positive educational experience.

The Model, originally based on the Kentucky Parent and Child Education (PACE) programme, brings together undereducated parents or adult care-givers with their three or four year old children for three days each week at a programme site, usually an elementary school. While the children participate in a high quality preschool programme, the adults work on basic academic and life-coping skills. The Model also develops positive interaction between parent and child, and enhanced parenting skills.

The intensive programme runs for the entire school year, and parents who make this major commitment are likely to see meaningful, lasting improvements in their own skills and attitudes, their youngsters' abilities, and their families' values and interaction patterns.

A summary of the major functions and outcomes of Kenan Model programmes reveals the power of this approach:

Adult basic skills instruction aims to raise the educational level of parents. Group instruction relating to parents' common needs and interests is combined with individualised study targeted at personal and academic goals. Adults develop learning strategies and communication skills which transfer to real life settings. In doing so, they build confidence and act as role models for their children, demonstrating the power of learning with their actions as well as their words.

The significance of these educational outcomes is not lost on the participants. A mother in the Louisville programme says, *"I left school at 14, had 6 children, and finally I went back to school with my 3 year old to get a job and get off welfare."* It took her two years after she finished the programme to finally get a good enough job to support her family. *"The first time that welfare cheque wasn't in the mailbox, the kids came to me,"* she said. *"They were worried. I told them there weren't going to be any more cheques in the mailbox."*

Early childhood education offers two to five year old children a developmentally appropriate programme adapted from the acclaimed High/Scope curriculum. Children initiate learning experiences through play activities which they plan and carry out. This "active learning" builds on their existing strengths and accomplishments, and allows each child to develop at an individual pace. The children also acquire the cognitive and social skills necessary for school readiness.

A mother in a Richmond, Virginia, programme noted a major change in her three year old child: *"He went from one or two words; now you just can't hush him and he's always asking, 'What's this?' and 'What's that?'"*

Parent Time is a learning and support group that provides parents with information on issues of concern – such as early childhood development, health and nutrition, and budgeting – and offers them an opportunity to share feelings and problems with their peers. Many adults struggling with the problems of parenthood and poverty appreciate the opportunity to interact in a supportive, nonjudgmental atmosphere.

"School was once just a nest of bad memories for me. I hated it beyond words. Now, I love it because this is where I was dared to dream again. I will be forever grateful for what family literacy gave me," one mother said, *"but I am even more grateful for what it took away. What it took was the fear, the self-doubts, the emotional illiteracy."*

Parent and Child Together (PACT). This part of the Kenan Model provides parents and children with daily practice in positive interaction. It is a critical component because it synthesises the learning from the other programme components. If family literacy is about changing messages, then PACT is designed to produce lasting changes in the interaction patterns that communicate those altered messages. It is during PACT time that parents practice what they have learned during adult education and Parent Time about their children's development, and come to realise the importance of their roles as models and teachers.

PACT involves child-parent pairs playing together in the early childhood classroom for 30 - 45 minutes each day. The activities are child-initiated, and parents learn how to encourage their children's imagination, thinking, and use of language, while actively participating in the activities.

A mother in Walnut, North Carolina, explains, *"It is a joy to watch him grow and learn. I never knew I could teach him anything or that learning could even be fun."*

The Toyota Families for Learning Programme

Urban Initiatives

NCFL was able to widen its efforts to reach families in need by establishing the Toyota Families for Learning Programme with the help of the Toyota Motor Corporation. In just three years Toyota has granted the Centre $5.1 million to launch family literacy programmes in fifteen American cities with populations of over 300,000. Toyota's contribution to date has generated nearly three times that amount in local funds from the budgets of the public and private sectors of the cities. In the ten cities where the programmes are established the seeds are growing and the models are being replicated. An additional five cities will be added in the fall of 1993.

The Toyota Families for Learning Programme is structured in the same fashion as all NCFL programmes. Undereducated parents work towards increasing their literacy and life skills while their children attend preschool under the same roof. Soon these parents and children become as partners in learning and success.

In its first year 234 families (936 individuals) were served by the Toyota Programme. An estimated 500 new families (2000 individuals) are expected to enter the programme during the 1992 - 93 school year. Well over 100 public and private organisations are

supporting these families. In the participating cities, this collaborative network will remain in place after the Toyota funding has ended to ensure the long-term viability of the family literacy programmes.

Profile of Toyota families

- age range of parents 17 to 50, most early 20s to mid-30s
- 17% white, 63% African-American, 17% Hispanic and 3% Other
- 96% of parents unemployed
- 70% unmarried
- 82% of families on public assistance
- 77% have annual incomes under $7500 a year
- average number of children per family: 3

First year results in cities

Because the Toyota Families for Learning Programme is so new, first year results can only project what kind of success the programme is having. But these early results are encouraging. The gains made by the families indicate that the family overall is moving to break the cycle of undereducation and poverty. By expanding their basic skills and increasing their employability potential the adults are moving toward self-sufficiency. Additionally, the children are much more likely to enter school ready to learn, thereby avoiding retention in grade.

In order to measure progress, children in the Toyota Programme were given the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test twice – before they started the family literacy programme, and at the end of the school year.

BEFORE At the beginning of the Programme, 93% of the children scored at or below the 25th percentile. That means that compared to children nationwide, 93% of the Toyota Programme children scored in the bottom quarter. Even more alarmingly, over half scored at the 1st percentile, putting them in the bottom 1% of all American children. And only 1% of Toyota Programme students scored at or above the 50th percentile.

AFTER Once they had completed the Programme year, the numbers were very different. 27% of those children who had scored in the bottom quarter were now above the 25th percentile, meaning one quarter of these children were no longer in an 'at risk' category. Nearly 60% of those who had been at the very bottom, at the 1st percentile, increased their scores. Finally, the percentage of children scoring at or above average increased dramatically.

Further NCFL studies indicate that by the time these children are in grade school, all of them will have broken out of the 'at risk' category. Even those who do not show an immediate score change are already on the road to improving their skills to a level where they can achieve academically. Through family literacy, they are on their way to reversing a downward spiral.

The promise NCFL's family literacy programme holds is demonstrated by the gains its programme graduates have made. By treating the family as a unit – understanding that the problems individuals in the family face are related and must be taken together – the National Centre for Family Literacy has shown that it can break the cycle of under-education.

What do we know about the effectiveness of family literacy?

Preliminary research indicates that intensive programme models, like the Kenan Trust Family Literacy Programme, the Kentucky PACE Programme, and the Toyota Families for Learning Programmes, are succeeding with both generations. Recent studies of participants of Kenan Model programmes show the impact on parents and children.

A follow-up study was conducted in family literacy programmes where the National Centre for Family Literacy trained the teachers. This study focused on family literacy programmes in three states: West Virginia, Kentucky and Indiana. Of the 30 family literacy programmes identified in those three states, 14 were chosen to be included in the study. Purposeful sampling was used to identify sites in Indiana and West Virginia. Stratified random sampling was used to choose the sites in Kentucky.

This study examined current school success of children who participated in family literacy programmes as preschoolers. The children are now in grades Kindergarten through to grade 4. Ratings by the children's elementary school teachers show that this group of 'at risk' children are performing much higher than would be expected if they had not participated in the family literacy programmes.

'At risk' children typically enter school without the readiness skills necessary for success. They fall behind their peers academically and are often referred for remedial and special education services.

- **In the group of 'at risk' students who participated in family literacy programmes as preschoolers, only 25% subsequently received Chapter 1 or special education services in the early grades of elementary school.**

Studies have shown that kindergarten and first grade teachers can accurately predict those children destined for failure in school. From their classroom experience, they recognise the indicators of future school failure.

- **When rated by their current elementary school teachers, 90% of the children who had participated in the family literacy programmes were not considered 'at risk' for school failure.**

'At risk' children often lack the types of home experiences that prepare them for school. They are not exposed to school-like activities at home and have not been motivated to participate in those kinds of activities.

- **Over 90% of the children who participated in family literacy programmes were rated by their current elementary teachers as being motivated to learn.**

When 'at risk' children enter school, they are behind academically and fall further behind each year.

- **None of the children who participated in the family literacy programme had been retained in grade in elementary school.**

This study also examined teachers' ratings of parental support for their children's education. The parents in this study were all school dropouts. They all had a history of failure in school. Many lacked the knowledge and skills required for supporting children's educational achievement. These parents typically want their children to succeed in school but don't provide the necessary support.

The parents who participated in the family literacy programmes developed the skills and knowledge necessary for supporting their children's education.

- **Teachers consistently rated the parents as being supportive of their children's education.**

The parents in this study had few, if any, positive memories of their own school experiences. Before entering the family literacy programmes, they reported feeling uncomfortable when talking to teachers and principals. Many said they didn't like to even be in a school building. One of the outcomes of participation in the family literacy programmes was the development of comfort with schools and school personnel.

- **In addition to supporting the education of their children through home activities, well over half of the parents currently serve as volunteers in their children's elementary schools.**

Student retention, a perennial problem in Adult Basic Education, is improved in these programmes. Almost half of the parents in these studies had dropped out of other adult education programmes in the past. They persisted in their studies this time for a variety of reasons. Teachers focused instruction on individual goals and demonstrated a caring, respectful attitude toward the students as persons. Perhaps most significant, parents reported a sense of "family" developed within groups, and learners supported each other in both academic and personal areas. Many parents said they had never before had such a support group. Another extremely telling factor in adult retention was the urging of children; many parents reported their children loved school and would not allow them to miss a day.

While these findings must be regarded as preliminary, they do provide evidence that teachers', students' and administrators' subjective assessments of programme outcomes are being substantiated over time. Family literacy is creating two generations of lifelong learners.

The link between undereducated parents and the potential failure of their children is well documented. But the reverse is also true: the link between educated parents and children who are motivated to learn is just as strong, or stronger. The same forces that work to make a downward spiral can be channelled to create an upward one.

No natural resource is as important to a country's future as its people. And because the family unit is the building block of any society, it is vital that we as a nation work together to support and nuture healthy, educated families.

Family literacy is not a panacea, nor is it a quick and easy "fix." Complex, deeply rooted problems are not quickly or easily solved. But family literacy is an important part of the solution. This powerful intervention holds great promise for breaking the intergenerational cycle of undereducation and fulfilling America's broadest educational aims.

Intergenerational literacy intervention: possibilities and problems

Peter Hannon

Peter Hannon is a Senior Lecturer in Education at Sheffield University where he has carried out a number of studies on parental involvement in young children's literacy development. Previously he worked with preschool children and their families in a community primary school in the north of England. He was invited by UNESCO and the City University of New York to contribute to a panel on Intergenerational Literacy at the 1992 International Adult Urban Literacy Conference at U.N. Headquarters, New York. Here we reprint a copy of his presentation.

It is clear why adult literacy educators are now focusing on intergenerational and family literacy processes. A common reason for adults entering programmes is being a parent and wanting to be part of their children's literacy development – especially in the preschool and early school years. Many students, of course, are not parents of young children but even they often have some kind of intergenerational role (as grandparents, aunts/uncles, siblings, future parents, etc.). There is also the long term view to consider – some adult students of the future are children today and one has to ask whether something could be done now – in the family context – rather than leaving it all for later.

However, I approach this field from the opposite direction to that of most of you at this conference – from early childhood education rather than adult education – starting with children and moving to the adults rather than the other way around. It is through being interested in children's literacy development, and the role of parents in it, that I have had to think about family literacy.

The most useful contribution I can make here is to offer some ways of thinking about the role of parents in children's early literacy development (actually their preschool literacy development). Any family literacy intervention has to be based (explicitly or implicitly) on some kind of view of the parent's role. I want to indicate possibilities for working with parents, and to identify one or two dilemmas or problems which I think we face at the present.

Let me explain how I came into this field. During the 1980s I worked with several colleagues and students at Sheffield on a series of studies into home factors in school reading attainment (concentrating on young children in poor urban areas).

We found that parents – even in very disadvantaged circumstances – were often very active in helping children learn to read; their help was positively associated with school reading attainment; almost all parents wanted to help more; and it was feasible to intervene to increase that help (Hannon, 1987). We found that parents' helping strategies at home could be superior, in important ways, to those of school teachers in busy classrooms (Hannon, Jackson & Weinberger, 1986). It was clear, too, that even parents who had reading difficulties wanted to help their children (their desire to help may have been all the stronger for that reason). Ways could be found to involve them, and they sometimes became better readers themselves by being involved (Hannon & Jackson, 1987).

All this was very encouraging. But there was cause for concern too. The 1980s were years when many of us became increasingly dissatisfied with school methods for teaching reading – the reliance on a narrow range of texts ('reading scheme books', as they are called in Britain), the separation of reading from writing, and the concern with form over function.

We realised that our focus should be literacy rather than just reading, and at that time research into literacy was revealing aspects of preschool development previously overlooked. The work of Clay, Goodman, Sulzby, Taylor, Brice-Heath and others showed us how preschool children explore the functions and nature of written language – something which obviously depends on interaction with parents and other family members. Also, we knew from the work of Wells, Tizard and others in Britain that some preschool measures of literacy development were strong predictors of later school attainment.

We wanted to find ways of using these insights, sharing them with parents if possible, and giving parents a bigger role before children came to school.

A further stimulus to do something came from a survey we carried out in Sheffield which showed that virtually all parents of preschool children – irrespective of background – were trying to help their children's literacy although they often felt they might not be doing it in the right way (Hannon & James, 1990). Preschool teachers seriously underestimated and undervalued this parental involvement.

A framework for understanding the parent's role

We have found it helpful think of children's early literacy experience in terms of three strands.

First: there are encounters with environmental print. This is an almost unavoidable feature of urban life in Western industrialised countries (I am painfully aware of my ignorance of the extent to which this might be true, if at all, of developing countries). Children's experience of environmental print varies according to several factors, including family income.

Second, there are early writing experiences. Given basic materials most young children – at least in the urban contexts with which I am familiar – will eventually try to write. It may emerge in the context of drawing, playing, joining in family activities, or asserting their independence. How far they go depends on aspects of the parent's role which I will come to in a moment.

Third, there are books and other texts – usually shared with a parent or other family member. There is huge variation in children's experience of books before they come to school, ranging from thousands of hours in some families to almost nothing in others.

What about the parent's role? Here are some of the things children can get from them.

IMPORTANCE OF PARENT'S ROLE

PARENTS CAN PROVIDE ...

	Examples
..... A MODEL	Reading signs, directions, instructions, packaging, print in the environment; writing notes, letters, shopping lists; reading newspapers, magazines, books; bringing work home
..... OPPORTUNITIES	Trips, visits, shopping; materials for scribbling, drawing, writing; opportunities for socio-dramatic play; children's books
..... RECOGNITION	Recognising and explicitly valuing children's early achievements in making sense of environmental print, in early writing, and in using books
..... INSTRUCTION	Alphabet, letter names/sounds, letter formation, logo recognition, oral reading

Figure 1. *Importance of parent's role.*

Parents can provide a **model** for using written language, for example when children see them reading signs, directions and other print in the environment; writing notes, letters, lists, etc.; and reading newspapers, magazines, books. (I suspect that many of us here provide a powerful literacy model when we bring work home and our children see us reading and writing.)

They can provide **opportunities** for children: through having print in the home, taking children out on trips and visits; providing drawing/writing materials, involving children in sending letters, cards; they can provide books, and make time to share them with children.

They may also structure or 'scaffold' these opportunities so that children do as much as possible independently yet, with the right amount of help, still succeed in real tasks (achieving today with the parent's help what tomorrow they will manage on their own).

Parents can provide **recognition** of early literacy achievements whether it is their children getting to know logos, producing letter-like shapes, inventing spelling, handling books, or joining in stories. Recognition means seeing what children can do rather than what they cannot do (it's the difference between saying 'Ah, you've written your name!' and 'It's only scribbling').

Some parents provide a fourth element, **instruction** deliberately teaching the alphabet, writing skills, and so on).

We can now go back and look at the strands of literacy experience in relation to the parent's role (Figure 2).

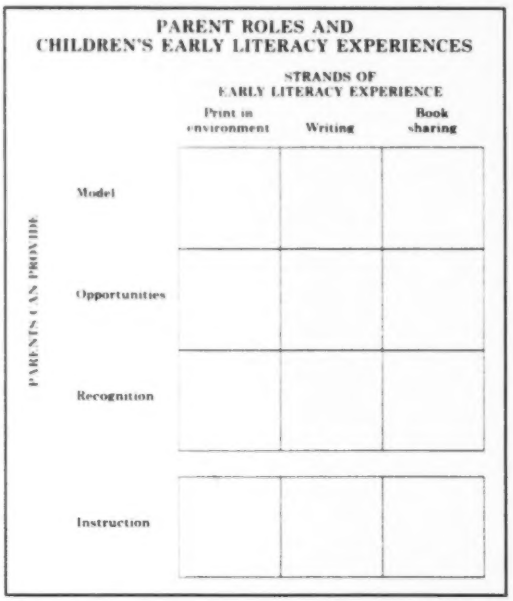

Figure 2. *Parent roles and children's early literacy experiences.*

Parents can provide a model, opportunities, and recognition in relation to each strand. Some may provide instruction too.

Possibilities

I do not claim that this framework gives us a complete picture but it does help us see intervention possibilities in terms of attempts to make changes in the various cells in Figure 2.

For example, there have been several intervention programmes based on bringing books into children's homes (in England, projects in Liverpool and Calderdale; in the States, in Pittsburgh and Illinois). This can make a dramatic change to parents' ability to provide opportunities for children to experience books but it does not necessarily change the other ways parents influence what children learn from, and about, books.

I do not know of many examples of intervention focused on writing (although I am aware of an interesting study in Texas which, as I see it, did try to increase parent modelling and recognition of writing as well as children's opportunities).

There may have been interventions focused on environmental print but I am not familiar with them. Could we have intervention to produce changes in

every cell in Figure 2? That is something we attempted in the Sheffield Early Literacy Development Project (Hannon, Weinberger & Nutbrown, 1991). We did not try to extend parents' instructional role but we did try to engage them in a dialogue about providing a model, opportunities and recognition, and we tried to show them why we thought environmental print and writing were important as well as books.

There is no way I can explain our programme in detail in this paper. All I can say is that we worked with different kinds of families and a wide range of parent literacy levels. Our methods included providing books/materials, small group meetings for parents, and home visiting (see Weinberger, Hannon & Nutbrown, 1990). Our evaluation – based on case studies – suggested that the intervention had quite an impact on parents' recognition of preschool children's literacy development. In terms of opportunities, there was a very big change in children's access to books and, to some extent, in their exposure to environmental print. There was some change in parents providing a model, at least in relation to writing. Now that these methods have been shown to be feasible, the effects on family literacy need to be investigated through an experimental research design.

Problems

I will highlight two problems for discussion. The most fundamental and the most difficult one for educationists to confront is, 'Whose literacy are we trying to promote?'. In the Sheffield Project we did try very hard to listen to parents, to respond to *their* interests, and to have a dialogue with them. But in the end I think what we offered them was probably *school literacy* (albeit a reasonable version of it). We did not *impose* it – what we offered was eagerly taken up by the parents – but it could be argued that we brought something which did not fit naturally into the lives of all our families.

There is nothing necessarily wrong with this provided that we are aware of it and prepared for the possibility that alien literacy practices (however sensitively introduced) may not take root permanently if the family, community or work environment encourages something else. We need to be realistic here about what children and parents stand to gain from changes in family literacy (culturally, economically, politically). In addition, as a check on the dangers of one social group imposing its literacy on another, it is important to maximise community control over intervention programmes.

The second problem is the need for good quality research in this field. We need research which combines evaluation of intervention effects (and I think that means experimental quantitative designs) with qualitative studies of how an intervention is implemented and what it means for the participants. I strongly believe that we need both kinds of research. Without studies of effects we cannot be sure what benefits to expect at what cost in terms of resources. Without qualitative studies we will not know whether programmes genuinely empower parents or merely treat them as behavioural technicians implementing someone else's agenda. We also need longitudinal studies; and we need research which is not limited to single cultural settings.

Conclusion

So where do we go from here? Despite the problems, I certainly believe that intervention is worthwhile. The positive responses we have experienced from families are too strong to be ignored.

Perhaps the issues we need to discuss now are whether we are clear enough about what we are trying to change in intergenerational literacy (I have offered some ideas concerning parents and preschool children), and how we can resolve some of the deeper problems raised by intervention.

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Workforce Education, family literacy and economic development

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All societies must prepare each generation of its human resources with the knowledge and skills needed to perpetuate and extend the culture of the society. In industrialised nations, this preparation typically involves engaging infants at home and in the community. Then, children enter into a formal education sequence of ten or more years that is designed to promote the development of a variety of cognitive abilities, such as literacy and mathematics knowledge, as well as certain attitudes and values conducive to the person's participation in the adult society. The childhood education system is supposed to help parents and/or other caregivers prepare the emergent adult to enter into the activities of adults in the society. This may include various civic activities, such a voting, participating in community affairs, governing, obtaining a driver's license, or other adult activities such as having and raising children, managing a home and personal affairs, and joining the group of adults available for commercial work, referred to here as the workforce.

Workforce literacy problems

The international press recently reported studies by the Organisation for Econonmic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which concluded that in many industrialised nations, the developmental sequence outlined above is not as effective as it should be in producing adults with the literacy skills needed to meet the demands of contemporary society, particularly the world of work. Many of the young adults entering the workforce are considered lacking in basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills. According to the OECD, "functional illiteracy" is a growing problem in the workforces of many industrialised nations (Wheatley, 1992).

The news story reported that in the United States, the Secretary of Labour expressed concern that some twenty percent of high school graduates could not read their own diplomas. In Canada over 40% of adults were considered so lacking in literacy skills that they could not meet most everyday reading demands. Officials from Germany estimated that there were between 500,000 and 3 million illiterates in Germany. In France, the Ministry of Defence estimated that of over 400,000 young men called up for military service in 1990-91, 20% could not adequately read and understand a 70-word text. In London, the Daily Mail for September 30, 1992 published an article stating that "Eight million Britons are so illiterate they are unable to follow up a job advert".

In many nations, a major factor contributing to workforce literacy problems, in addition to the failure of the developmental system for enculturating literacy mentioned above, is that immigration introduces into the workforce a number of people without the oral language and literacy skills of the dominant society. Many of these immigrants may also be illiterate or only marginally literate in their native language. In the United States, for instance, one of three students enrolled in adult basic education studies English as a second language (US Department of Education, 1991). In California, some 80% of the enrolments in adult basic education programmes are adults seeking English as a second language training (California Workforce Literacy Task Force, 1990).

In addition to the general workforce literacy problems identified by the OECD study, problems of specifc workplace literacy were also reported. Here, the OECD considered that the problem was not one of failing to meet literacy standards upon entrance into the workforce, but rather one in which the literacy demands of jobs in particular workplaces had changed. In this case, previously qualified workers faced new literacy demands for which they were no longer qualified.

While acknowledging the paucity of trustworthy data, the OECD opined that about one-third of workers could do their jobs better if they were more literate. In one survey, about one-third of Canadian firms reported serious difficulties in introducing new technology and increasing productivity because of the poor skills of their workers. In Britain, a survey suggested that *"Britain's general 'under-education' would create serious economic problems when competition with more highly-skilled nations intensified in the single European market"* (The Daily Telegraph, September 30, 1992).

The Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning (WELL) Strategy for Education and Economic Reform

In the United States, concern for workforce education and literacy and its relationship to international competitiveness was expressed in a 1983 report entitled *A Nation at Risk*. That report argued that the public schools were not doing their job in preparing an educated workforce that could compare in the new global economy. Further, many of the adults in the workforce were only marginally literate. Some 13% were considered functionally illiterate and unable to find good work nor to be as productive as more literate and better trained members of the workforce.

Following the *Nation at Risk* report were a succession of reports that led, for the first time in the United States, to a set of national education goals and a national education strategy endorsed by the President of the United States. The most influential of these reports are reviewed below to set the stage for the introduction of the WELL Strategy which regards adult education as the key to economic growth and educational reform.

The Workforce 2000 Study. Perhaps the most important report that added a significant new dimension to the issue of educational reform and workforce competitiveness, and stimulated the eventual conception of the WELL Strategy was the 1987 report by the Hudson Institute entitled, *Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the Twenty-First Century* (Johnston & Packer, 1987). What the labour economists pointed out in that report was that, even if public school reform could be rapidly accomplished, it would have little influence on workplace productivity in the next twenty years because out-of-school youth and adults are not subject to school reforms and they will constitute more than three-quarters of the workforce of the year 2000.

Adult Skills Assessments. This new appreciation of the importance of the present workforce to the nation's competitiveness posture of the next century focused attention on programmes for the education and training of out-of-school youth and adults. Of special concern was youth and adult "literacy" or "basic skills". The *Nation at Risk* report had suggested that some 13% of high school leavers were "functionally illiterate" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). In 1986 the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) published the results of a national survey of the literacy skills of young adults 21 to 25 years of age. It reported that one in five failed to meet the eighth grade standard for functional literacy established a quarter century earlier in the War on Poverty (Kirsch & Jungeblut, 1986). The Work in America Institute reported data suggesting that over 50% of young adults aged 18 to 23 in 1980 had literacy skills below those of the beginning tenth grader, while one in twenty had skills below that of a fifth grade child (Rosow & Zager, 1988, pp.172-177).

The Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce. This Commission reported in June, 1990 the results of a year-long study of the productivity of the American workforce in relation to that of other, strongly competitive nations. They concluded that the American workplace is too often designed to remove the requirements for the use of complex actions by workers, following the "scientific management" approach of the early industrial age. This approach produces the assembly line type of work in which workers perform one prescribed action, make no decisions and management does all the thinking (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 1990).

Competitor nations, on the other hand, were found to be using a "high performance" approach to work in which many complex actions and decisions are pushed "down" from management to line workers. The use of "focus factory" or "total business" schemes in manufacturing, for instance, requires line workers to take on responsibility for an entire product. This means contacting customers, taking orders, obtaining raw materials in just enough supply to meet present needs (but not so much as to require expensive warehousing), negotiating in the work team to prepare production schedules, producing a product, performing quality control on the product, packaging and shipping the product to the customer.

The Commission recommended that American industry provide much more education and training for the existing workforce, and that a new educational system for children and adults be developed that would provide "high performance" schools. In this system, all children would be permitted to strive for a "Certificate of Initial Mastery" by the age of sixteen. This Certificate would certify the student as work-ready for entry level jobs in high performance businesses.

For students "at risk" for dropping out of school, a "Youth Centre" school separate from the regular secondary school would be established. Such Centres would offer apprenticeship programmes or other types of part-school, part-work programmes to help students make the transition from school to work. Then, once on the job, "Certificates of Advanced Mastery" would be available to provide incentives for workers to strive to complete more education and training to develop higher levels of competence. Promotions and pay raises would then be based on competence, rather than on seniority as in many companies.

The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS). Following up on the recommendations of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, the Secretary of Labour in 1990 established the SCANS to identify the skills necessary for productive work in high performance business and industries. These skills, once identified, and subjected to modifications based on national forums, are to form the basis for the "Certificates of Initial Mastery" recommended by the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce. With these skills and certification procedures identified, the SCANS aims to provide a stimulus for schools to transform themselves from the "assembly line" models that reflect "assembly line" workplaces, to "high performance" schools that resemble "high performance" workplaces (The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991).

The National Education Goals and the Intergenerational Cycle of Cognitive Development. Reflecting the national mood for educational reform across the lifespan to make the US more competitive in the new world economic order, the nation's fifty Governors and the President in February of 1990 adopted six ambitious national education goals (see Figure 1) (US Department of Education, 1991). Again, reflecting the newly recognised importance of adult education in improving national competitiveness and in reforming the schools through parental involvement, half of these goals concern adult education and the adults' role in the education of their children.

The first of the goals calls for all American children to be prepared by parents at home and in the community to be ready for learning in school by the time they are school age. The second, third and fourth goals pertain to reform efforts in the K-12 school system. The fifth goal states, *"By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship"*. The sixth goal calls for every school in America to be free of drugs and violence and to offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning. It calls for parents, business and community organisations to form teams to work together to achieve this goal.

Goals one, five, and six focus on the role of adults and the community in the education of each new generation of citizens. Adults themselves need to be highly educated so that as parents they may prepare their children for learning in school. They need skills and knowledge so that they can individually compete for well-paying jobs and serve as members of a world-class workforce that can compete for high wage jobs in the new world economic order. And they need to constitute a social community that controls violence, drug abuse, and is conducive to learning both in and out of school.

AMERICA 2000: An Education Strategy

In what is more or less the culmination of the various efforts that have forged an interest in adult education as a major part of the United States' human resources development efforts, on April 18, 1991, the US President announced *AMERICA 2000: An Education Strategy*. This is a four-track strategy for revitalising American education for the 21st century. Significantly, while the strategy does emphasise improving the K-12 education system, two of the four tracks are concerned with the education of out-of-school adults (US Department of Education, 1991).

Track III of AMERICA 2000 is entitled *For the Rest of Us: Yesterday's Students, Today's Workforce: A Nation of Students*. In a move to transform the United States from a "Nation at Risk" to a "Nation of Students", this part of the strategy states that:

"Eighty-five percent of America's workforce for the year 2000 is already in the workforce today, so improving schools for today's and tomorrow's students is not enough to assure a competitive America in 2000. And we need more than job skills to live well in America today. We need to learn more to become better parents, neighbours, citizens and friends. Education is not just about making a living; it is also about making a life.

"That is why the President is challenging adult Americans to "go back to school" and make this a "Nation of Students". For our children to understand the importance of thier own education, we must demonstrate that learning is important for grown-ups, too. We must "go back to school" ourselves. The President is urging every American to continue learning throughout his or her life, using the myriad formal and informal means available to gain further knowledge and skills."

Track III goes on to recommend that business and labour establish job-related skill standards built around core proficiencies, such as those identified by the SCANS, that can form the basis for "skill certificates" to be awarded to youth and adults who qualify and that skill "clinics" be established in every large community where people can find out how well their present skills compare with those they would like to have for working in various jobs and where they can acquire the skills and knowledge they need.

The Track III statement states that Federal agencies will set an example for other employers by embarking upon a government-wide programme of skill upgrading and the nation's adult education efforts will be strengthened by the specification of performance standards for all federally aided programmes and making programmes accountable for meeting these standards.

The "Learning Community". Track IV of AMERICA 2000 calls for the creation of drug-free, non-violent communities where learning can happen. This Track points out that there are limits to what the government and schools can accomplish:

"Government at every level can play a useful role, and it is incumbent upon all of us to see that this is done efficiently and adequately. But much of the work of creating and sustaining healthy communities – communities where education really happens – can only be performed by those who live in them: by parents, families, neighbours and other caring adults; by churches, neighbourhood associations, community organisations, voluntary groups and the other "little platoons" that have long characterised well-functioning American communities. Such groups are essential to building relationships that nurture children and provide them with people and places to which they can turn for help and guidance."

To accomplish the development of learning communities AMERICA 2000 emphasises the importance of individual responsibility.

"Increased attention will be focused on adult behaviour, responsibility for children and family, and community values essential for strong schools. This includes involving parents as teachers of their children and as school partners."

The WELL Strategy

The AMERICA 2000 education strategy is presented as a series of four, separate, parallel tracks. However, this conceptualisation is not valid because, in fact, the four tracks are interrelated. In Figure 1 a new conceptualisation of the National Education Goals and the AMERICA 2000 Strategy is presented that

explicitly recognises the interrelationships among the six education goals and the four tracks of the AMERICA 2000 Strategy.

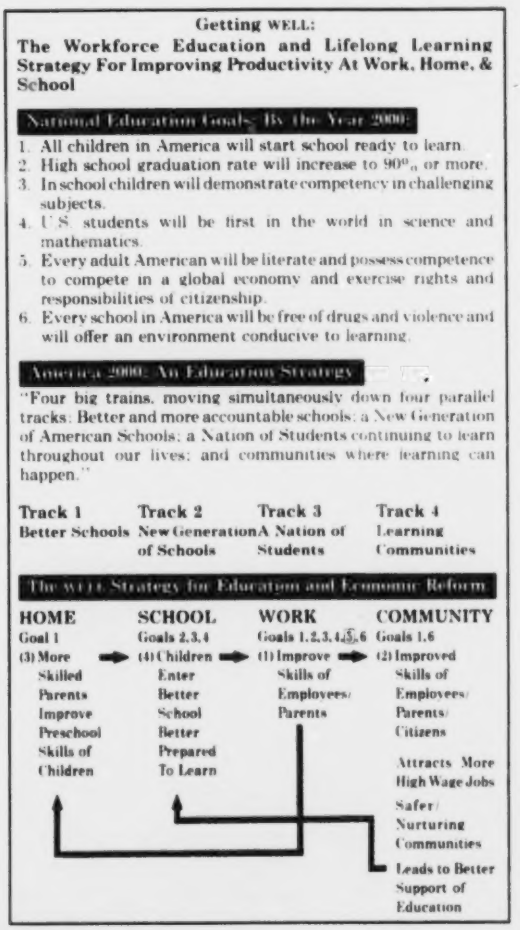
Getting WELL:
The Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning Strategy For Improving Productivity At Work, Home, & School
National Education Goals: By the Year 2000:
1. All children in America will start school ready to learn.
2. High school graduation rate will increase to 90% or more.
3. In school children will demonstrate competency in challenging subjects.
4. U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics.
5. Every adult American will be literate and possess competence to compete in a global economy and exercise rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
6. Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer an environment conducive to learning.
America 2000: An Education Strategy
"Four big trains, moving simultaneously down four parallel tracks: Better and more accountable schools; a New Generation of American Schools; a Nation of Students continuing to learn throughout our lives; and communities where learning can happen."
Track 1 Better Schools
Track 2 New Generation of Schools
Track 3 A Nation of Students
Track 4 Learning Communities
The WELL Strategy for Education and Economic Reform
HOME
Goal 1
(3) More Skilled Parents Improve Preschool Skills of Children
SCHOOL
Goals 2,3,4
(4) Children Enter Better School Better Prepared To Learn
WORK
Goals 1,2,3,4,5,6
(1) Improve Skills of Employees/ Parents
COMMUNITY
Goals 1,6
(2) Improved Skills of Employees/ Parents/ Citizens
Attracts More High Wage Jobs
Safer/ Nurturing Communities
Leads to Better Support of Education

Figure 1. *The WELL Strategy corrects the America 2000 Strategy and shows that Adult Education, Track 3, is the central point for new investments in education. The adult's education then affects homes, schools, communities as well as workplaces. It affects both the present and future workforce.*

The WELL Strategy places Track 3, becoming a nation of students, with an emphasis upon workforce education and adult lifelong learning, as the number one priority for human resources development that can lead to both economic and educational reform. This is based on four interrelated consequences that result from improvements in the education of adults.

(1) Better educated adults produce better educated children. As illustrated in Figure 2, parents', and especially mothers' education levels are related to the development of children's learning abilities before school (Goal 1), during school (Goals 2,3,4), and into adulthood (Goal 5). This suggests that adult education should be emphasised in a human resources development policy because such education may provide "double duty dollars." That is, it may affect not just the adults, but also their children, and hence the next generation of workers when the adult's children grow up (The California Workforce Literacy Task Force, 1990).

The idea that adult workforce literacy education can affect family literacy is reinforced by research by the Wider Opportunities for Women (Van Fossen & Sticht, 1991). This research studied the effects of participation in literacy and/or job skills training by women on (1) their behaviour towards their children and (2) their childrens behaviour in school. As Figure 3 indicates, mothers in the training programmes reported that, as a result of their participation in the literacy and job training programmes, they talked more with their children about school, helped their children more with their homework, and so forth. In turn, this led to reports that their children showed improvements in their school grades (45%), test scores (42%) and so on (Figure 4).

Figure 5 presents samples of observations by interviewers who went to programme participant's homes to find out if there were indicators, beyond the self reports of the women, that participating in the programme had some effects on the women's children. As indicated, the home observers found that children reported changed attitudes about the value of education, they reported that their mother's helped them with their homework, and that their mother read to them more.

This concept of the intergenerational transfer of literacy skills from parents to children has become a major factor in adult education in the United States. Major programmes of family literacy have been legislated by the United States Congress. One programme, called "Even Start" calls for literacy programmes that educate parents and children together. It is funded now at some $90 million a year (Business Council for Effective Literacy, 1993, p. 2). In October, 1992 the laws were changed regulating the US Head Start programme, funded at some $2.9 billion. It is now mandatory that this programme, originally strictly an early childhood education programme, offer adult literacy training to children's parents.

(2) Better educated adults are more productive on the job. The Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce and the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) both advocate the development of a high skilled workforce as a means of stimulating more businesses and industries to adopt high performance work practices that empower workers to make decisions, interact with customers, and participate as members of worker-management teams. The aim is to increase the productivity of workplaces so that businesses may compete better in the international marketplace (Marshall & Tucker, 1992).

The fact that more highly education and literate adults are more productive is one of the reasons the military services try to recruit high school graduates who achieve above the median on the Armed Forces Qualification Test or reading and mathematics skills. Studies in the military have indicated that more highly literate personnel who use their literacy skills while performing job tasks such as automobile repair or supply clerk's forms completion, may show

Figure 2. *Performance of young adults on the Reading Proficiency scale of the National Assessment of Educational Progress's profile of literacy (1986) and the Department of Defence's profile of reading and mathematics on the Armed Forces Qualification Test in the 1980 renorming of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery as a function of mother's education level. After the person's own years of education, mother's years of education is the best prediction of her children's achievement in education and their performance on achievement tests such as the NAEP and the AFQT. Father's education is also correlated with their children's subsequent achievement in school and on tests, but not to as great a degree. These data suggest that adult education may have an intergenerational impact on children's educational achievement.*

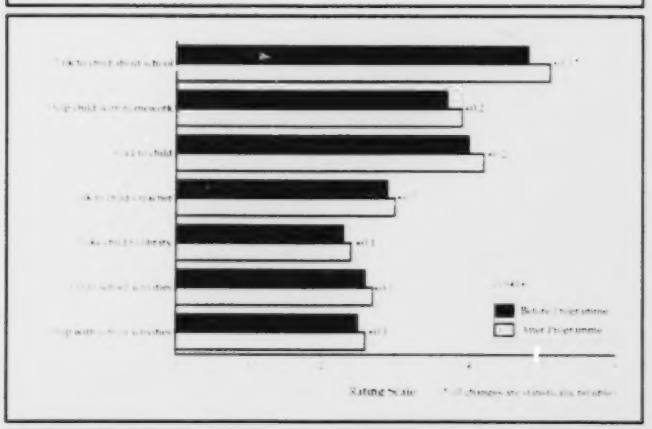

Figure 3. *Mothers' average ratings of the changes in the frequency with which they participated in the different activities from before to after they completed one of the women's education programmes.*

* all changes are statistically reliable.

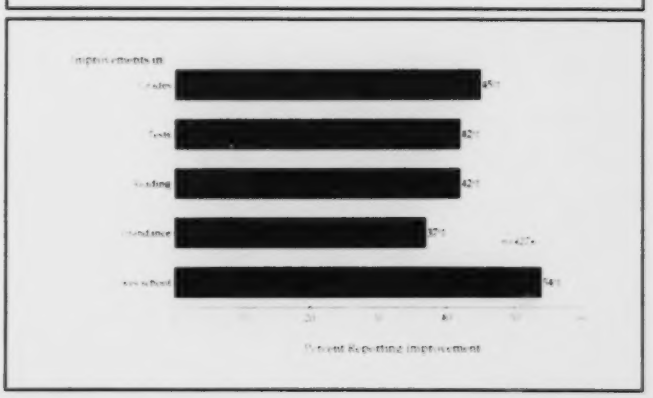

Figure 4. *Work by the WEE's and Wider Opportunities for Women on the intergenerational transfer of literacy showed that after mothers had participated in a women's education programme significant percentages of them reported positive improvements in their children's school activities and attitudes. This happened even though there was no plan or programme to have this "intergenerational transfer" of the benefits of mother's education to their children. In some cases, the education of the mother benefited 3 to 4 children.*

Mother and Child Activity	Notes From Home Visits and Interviews
Talk to child about School	"The kids say they had definitely seen a big change in their mother . . . she is happier and likes learning and studying with them. She 'constantly' tells them how important it is to stay in school and get a good education, so they won't live like she had to." (WOW Case C)
Read with Child	LD's son was glad his mother was going to school because ". . . she read him and his sisters stories and showed him words in the books." (MCA Case A)
Help Child With Homework	"The second-grader said, "I do my homework just like Mommy" . . . and thrust his homework into the interviewer's hand. (NEW Case C)
Take Child to Library	The mother states she "frequently goes to the Goodwill to purchase used books. I saw a nice collection of nursery rhymes, CAREBEARS, and other primary books in the small apartment." (WOW Case B)
Goes to and Helps With School Activities	"MM . . . has become very active in school and sees to it that her 7 year old son does his homework, studies for tests and is dressed, fed and at school on time each day." (MCA Case C)
Talk With Child's Teacher	"The client states . . . that now when she meets with the teacher, she is not intimidated and can discuss a workable solution that involves both teacher and parental support." (WOW Case B)

Figure 5. *Examples of comments recorded by observers in home visits to mothers involved in the study of the intergenerational transfers of literacy skills by Wider Opportunities for Women.*

productivity increases as much as 10 to 15% (California Workforce Literacy Task Force, 1990, pp. 17-18).

(3) Better educated adults produce safer communities conducive to learning. The Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning (WELL) Strategy aims not only to prepare people for productive work, but also to produce drug and violence free schools (Goal 6) and better "learning communities" (Track 4) that produce more highly skilled citizens who can attract more high performance, better paying jobs. From this point of view, workforce education aims not only to prepare people for an existing world of work, but also to stimulate the creation of a new world of work in which employees are empowered to participate in lifelong learning activities and to operate at a much higher level of cognitive and interpersonal skills than is currently the case both in and outside the workplace. Communities of better educated adults who are workers, citizens, and parents attract high technology, high wage jobs into the community, provide a higher tax base that will support better schools and better social services (law enforcement; adult education and training; day care; recreational facilities, etc.), and promote a safer, supportive community that can produce drug and violence free schools and influence better teaching and greater success for children in school (Track 1).

In one workplace education project, management, labour union members, and educators got together at AC Rochester in New York State, a supplier of components for General Motors automobile manufacturing, and developed adult education programmes in basic education, English as a second language, secondary school completion and basic reading skills programmes. This was done because it was discovered that many employees could not benefit from training that was needed to convert the manufacturing plant to a high performance organisation in which each worker had to take on more responsibility for quality control, work scheduling and so on. As a consequence of the company's reorganisation and education programmes, a new billion dollar contract was signed with a foreign nation and General Motors moved new work into the plant (Rosow & Zager, 1992, pp. 49-55). This suggests that organisational changes and greater investments in workforce education may lead to economic growth in the community and provide a better tax base for community activities.

(4) Better educated adults demand and get better schools. A major feature of the WELL Strategy is that focusing on Track 3 may lead to reform of the schools (Track 2). The hypothesis is that through investments in adult education in the workplace, workers will eventually demand and employers will develop more cognitively demanding, high performance workplaces in which employees are engaged in high order, collaborative, decision making skills along with management. Then, since the schools largely model themselves after the world of work, as they did in adopting the "scientific," "assembly line" schools fractionated into grade 1, 2, etc., after the industrial revolution, it is expected that schools will transform themselves into "high performance" organisations in which teachers, students and management collaborate in higher order decision making and management of the learning process. This will happen, it is hypothesised, when schools realise that they can no longer provide graduates with "assembly line"

mentalities for new, "high performance" workplaces. Instead, they must provide "high performance" mentalities for "high performance" work.

Following the WELL Strategy, greater investments in workforce education and more opportunity for lifelong learning provide the fulcrum for economic and educational reform. The WELL Strategy addresses calls for educational reform in the schools through reform of education for adults. Because most adults are in the workplace, the WELL Strategy takes an approach that stimulates the creation of a new world of work in which employees are empowered, educated and trained to operate at a much higher level of skills than is currently the case. The WELL Strategy plans for a positive cycle to occur such that, as the skills of the workforce are improved, there is demand by workers for more intellectually demanding workplaces that entail more collaboration and more shared decision-making with management. Then, it is anticipated that, as there is a shift away from the "assembly line" mentality in the workplace, there will be a corresponding demand for a reduced "assembly line" mentality in the schools.

In short, workforce education is hypothesised to lead to greater productivity in the workplace, homeplace, and schoolplace. It is a rather grand hypothesis, but the preliminary evidence reviewed earlier suggests that it is an hypothesis worthy of further consideration.

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Parent involvement in family literacy: an anti-poverty perspective

Ray Phillips

Ray Phillips is Director of the Newham Parents' Centre in the East End of London where he has been working since 1973. The Centre was formed in 1975 under parent control to promote parent involvement in education. Still under parent control, the Centre now employs nearly forty staff most of whom are full-time and have grown up in the area. Ray Phillips has contributed to many confreences and publications on parents in education.

"It has long been recognised that education is concerned with the whole man; henceforth it must be concerned with the whole family"
(Plowden Report: Children & their Primary Schools, 1967:48)

Introduction

The reminder by the Plowden researchers that learning begins at home was accompanied by the invocation that school should be 'cum parente' rather than 'in loco parentis'. This message has tended to fall on deaf ears. The formalism of state education has, for the most part, insisted on a distance between home and school that has inhibited co-operation between the family and classroom. We need to recognise that, at the conception of compulsory state schooling, parents were generally regarded as the source of problems rather than opportunities.

"Notwithstanding the large sums of money we have voted, we find a number of children badly taught, or utterly untaught, because there are too few schools and too many bad schools, and because there are large numbers of parents in the country who cannot, or will not, send their children to school."
(Forster 1870)

The Statist has little time for the family hearth!

In turn, this politics of separation has influenced the stratification of the education service into primary, secondary, tertiary and adult. Allegiances are vertical rather than horizontal. This very institutional grain has been challenged by the proponents of community education seeking to introduce local, as well as national, priorities and relevancies into the education service. Similarly, promoters of 'family literacy' must be prepared to shift the narrowly national path of educational discourse. Out of this clash between local and national agendas, a wider definition of literacy must be embraced:

"Literacy as one of the supreme skills handed on by education, not simply to facilitate the everyday activity or open up new realms of light entertainment, but literacy as a means of discovering and enlarging the reader's sense of life."
(Jackson & Marsden 1962: 199)

Without such a critical definition, there is no middle ground between narrow parochialism, on the one hand, and broad populism on the other.

In seeking to locate family literacy on this middle ground, this paper will examine three key elements of such an educational stratagem in the UK. Initially, we shall consider literacy programmes in the schools as a feature of the strategy against lingering poverty in the modern industrial state. Despite the mid-century promise of plenty and of "never having it so good", the UK is approaching the millennium with widespread illiteracy and poverty. How much has the link between the two been understood?

The second main concern of this paper will be to consider some of the theoretical contradictions for adult education in relocating educational attention within the family. Already, we have noted the systemic bias of the educational establishment against the local. However, we have an equally ingrained aversion in mainstream social enquiry against the notion of 'domestication'. Typically, the 'domus' or home has been viewed as the repository of reaction and acquiescence rather than as the mainspring of any radical revival.

Finally, the paper will develop a critique of parental involvement by contrasting passive, consumerist models of 'parental choice' with activist partnership strategies which may form the basis of dynamic family literacy schemes. Such a movement may prove to be a fitting testimony to the growing evidence of parental involvement in literacy:

"The emphasis of earlier work in the areas of reading and, to a lesser extent, number and parental involvement has been on measurable skill acquisition at later stages. There is some evidence now that the perspective is broadening to encompass both the acquisition of a range of literacy skills, and also adults, whether teacher or parents or both, helping equip children for LIFE-LONG LITERACY."
(Wolfendale 1992:42)

The setting of such an ambitious agenda offers the prospect of a convergence of interests amongst adults and children. Without this convergence, there is no firm foundation on which to build family literacy programmes.

Illiteracy as poverty

The complacency of the Western World at the end of the Fifties was characterised by the conventional wisdom of various, popular convergence theories that predicted an end to ideology – the last great social battles had been successfully fought! However, when the counting started in earnest in the Sixties the euphoria was quickly punctured. Unexpectedly poverty was rediscovered. First in the USA, with studies such as that of Michael Harrington revealing the 'other' America (Harrington, 1963), there were the social upheavals that led to President Johnson's war on poverty.

As the current inevitably crossed the Atlantic, the same questions were being posed in the UK. A series of strategic reports proceeded to pierce the egalitarian myth of equal opportunity. The Newson Report on secondary education (Newsom et al, 1963) was one of the first 'authorised' statements to deal in some detail with education in the slums. Following closely on the heels of this study, the Plowden Report extended the searchlight over primary education and, significantly, laid the foundations for a national programme of positive intervention:

"A possible assumption of the E.P.A. programme is that the most effective point at which to break into the vicious poverty circle is in early childhood, in the primary school or in the pre-school period : and this approach tends to lead to considerable emphasis on work with families, thus raising fundamental questions about the right of the state, through its agencies, to intervene in the relation between parents and children."

(Halsey et al, 1972)

Here, we witness the same diffidence that led to the prevarication of the 19th century liberal reformists in introducing compulsory schooling in England. Parents are, traditionally, best kept at arms length!

A new, reformist orthodoxy was now taking root. Educational strategies were being developed to bridge the previously separate private and public domains of home and school. Even commentators, who were generally sceptical on the grounds that education alone cannot solve the problems of poverty, were willing to offer credence to EPA aspirations:

"... the schools themselves could become, to a degree, centres of social regeneration; growth points of a new social consciousness among the poor, which might at last bring poverty under attack from its sufferers, no less than from the all-too-small battalions of liberal welfare workers and social administrators."

(Coates & Silburn, 1970:73)

What remained to be tested was the essential 'locus' of education. How far, if necessary, could the classroom move to one side? From the point of view of this paper, how far could the family assume a central role in any novel pedagogy?

At least, there was now the possibility to pose such questions. The paradigm that allowed this discourse was that of 'community development' which invited community education to be linked to wider goals of social action. In policy terms, government linked the DES sponsored EPA Programme to the Community Development Programme initiated by the Home Office. The emphasis was on partnership between national and local governments. Later, this partnership was shifted towards an extended liaison with the voluntary sector under the Urban programme that survived governments of various complexions for more than two decades from the late Sixties. The culmination of this exercise in 'social engineering' is the present, targeted City Challenge Programme within which the scope for educational action is severely circumscribed.

Nevertheless, recognition of the role for parental involvement within community development is evident in the residual guidelines of the Inner Area Programme, now on ice. More significantly, City Challenge areas have attracted up to a quarter of a million pounds per annum for the raising of pupil achievement through support such as parental involvement under the DFE GEST in-service support and training programme. Government, therefore, remains committed to family-based strategies set within the framework of community regeneration. Let us briefly consider the position of one such urban area where I presently work.

As an East End area having suffered from the long-term demise and eventual closure of the London Docks, the London Borough of Newham has been directly involved with all the above schemes of social engineering. In addition to having been home of one of the short-lived Community Development Projects in Canning Town, Newham supports over 100 schools, all of which qualified under the EPA points scheme. Since 1973, there has been a well-documented, continuous history of parent activism in the schools that was inspired by the earlier work of EPA activists in Liverpool:

"We have been encouraged by the work of such people as Eric Midwinter, who has proved that it is lack of information, confidence and time that prevents working class parents from being involved in the education of their children and NOT apathy or want of interest".

(Newham Education Concern, 1974)

From the early days of misunderstanding and hostility that typified relations between parents and LEA, two decades of strategically supported parent involvement have brought a working partnership to tackle issues such as literacy in a multicultural urban area (Phillips, 1989). A significant element of this parent participation has coalesced around the Newham Parents' Centre which is an integral part of Newham's successful bid to the DFE under the latest round of the GEST programme geared to the in-service support and training of workers in schools:

"The aims of this bid will be targeted at raising achievement through enhancing parental involvement in schools and assisting parents in developing a supportive climate for learning at home.... The benefits will be twofold in creating higher expectations of parents and positive study climates in the home for pupils. Effective homework activities will also enhance pupil achievement in basic literacy and numeracy skills raising teacher and pupil expectations"

(Newham Council, 1992)

Some of the catalytic features of the Parents' Centre's involvement will be appraised in the later stages of this paper.

A strength of the 'social engineering' approach to change is that educational issues such as literacy are situated within a wider framework of social action. Of course, the theoretical and practical validity of this framework may vary considerably:

"In 'community development' projects the more a region or area is broken down into 'local communities' without the study of these communities both as totalities in themselves and as parts of another totality (the area, region and so forth) – which in its turn is part of a still larger totality (the nation, as part of the continental totality) – the more alienation is intensified".
[Freire, 1971:138]

The relevance for the modern industrial state of Freire's analysis of peasant-based economies might usefully be tested in terms of community regeneration initiatives like City Challenge focused on areas where poverty and illiteracy are rife.

Pupil-linked educational strategies in Newham, for example, are being set within East London sub-regional plans for economic renewal. In turn, these relatively local schemes are intended as leverage for support and funding from the European Community. Directly involved in the control of the various delivery systems are pupils, parents, school governors, voluntary organisations and private sector as well as governmental agencies such as the Local Council, City Action Team, Training and Enterprise Council, London Docklands Development Corporation and Health Authority.

Given such an elaborate superstructure, there is an inevitable danger that management issues will pre-dominate over serious matters of context and style with regard to any literacy programmes launched. Families would appear to be but minor players on this community development pitch. Hence there is a need for a complementary anti-poverty perspective to reinforce the strengths and weaknesses of any social engineering model emanating from such established structures as the school. Still within the community development paradigm, adult education offers one way forward:

"Adult education must be seen, not simply as classes and discussions for the adult members of the community, but rather as an integral part of a whole series of activities sponsored by a government, the local authority, voluntary agencies, churches, residents' groups – which are community-based and concerned with the local community".
[Lovett, 1971]

Family strategies beyond domestication

Within much contemporary radical discourse on adult literacy, 'domestication' is a dirty word. Resonances of this usage can be traced in the expression of certain popular attitudes towards 'domesticity' and 'domestics'. Such dismissive language can be found in the writings of Freire in pursuit of a pedagogy of the oppressed:

"... to substitute monologue, slogans, and communiques for dialogue is to attempt to liberate the oppressed with the instruments of domestication."
[Freire, 1971:52]

Later in the same text, he discloses the grounds for his pejorative use of 'domus':

"Homes and schools (from nurseries to universities) exist not in the abstract but in time and space. Within the structures of domination they function largely as agencies which prepare the invaders of the future".
[Freire, 1971:152]

Prima facie, the home-school partnership hardly appears as fertile ground for tackling illiteracy.

The weight of such a critique rests on the assumption that top-down influences within the social system succeed in quashing any resistance from people or agencies below. The same determinism persuaded the de-schoolers to move away from the classroom. Hence, the struggle to build an effective educational programme must identify an agency which is genuinely accountable to people on the ground.

Yet, this accountability presupposes that issues which are of real concern to everyman and everywoman are taken seriously. Apart from the many macro-social examples of sexism that have fired the feminist movement, there is much evidence that important responsibilities such as child-rearing – the essential domestic economy – have been trivialised by the male-dominated media of social enquiry. This domestic subject matter must be taken more seriously by the designers of literacy programmes if they are really to start where people are 'at'.

Imposed hierarchies of value are also embedded in the literature of 'disadvantage', 'deprivation', 'deficit' etc:

"A contrast is drawn between the background characteristic of a manual worker's child and the middle class child. The former often suffers from the disadvantage of peer material conditions (low income, poor housing, overcrowding), limited parental education, lack of stimulation in the home, restricted linguistic and social skills, and lack of parental experience and ability in handling the school system to the child's advantage."
[Berthoud et al, 1981:242]

So, even if we were to accept such questionable assertions, what can the wretched manual worker do?! Such a string of negatives provides no foundation for a programme. Until an individual, or group of individuals, develops an identity and a sense of self-value there is no hope for conscious, forward movement. Such was the prerequisite realisation for a viable parent movement in Newham:

"We have consistently recognised the enormous pressure on the LEA. Yet, although we know that a borough like Newham needs financial resources and educational plant, we have learned that a real and often unrecognised resource is the parents".
[Newham Education Concern, 1974]

Family strategies must, therefore, attach importance to the home not in any condescending way but through the promotion of empathy between the partners involved.

Solidarity, not sympathy, is a crucial tool in forging personal and social development for any professional working in the field of poverty:

"Recently I attended a conference ... where poverty was the theme. Eminent and earnest labour leaders spoke. As the day wore on I became eerily disturbed at the difference

in tone from such discussions in the Thirties. At last I hit it: they were talking not political economy but philanthropy. Partly, maybe, this tone crept in because they were talking about our poor black and brown brothers. Mostly, however, it was because their attitude toward poverty is no longer part of their fighting economic theory. As labour economists they do not have solidarity with THESE poor"
(Goodman, 1960:54)

Translating such sentiments across the Atlantic into an English adult education context, we might usefully recall the Russell Committee's prescription for a comprehensive system of provision:

"the cohesion and source of identity of a local community depends largely on the vitality of the groups that compose it; and one of the functions of adult education will be to form and sustain such groupings and to promote their interaction. A local adult education service is a requisite of community life"
(Russell, 1973: 21)

As with the schooling initiatives discussed earlier in this paper, the community development paradigm offers a framework within which to consider family-based strategies for adult education.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education considered the scope for the development of statutory and voluntary provision in a series of reports. ACACE identified the 'dispositional, institutional and situational' barriers to access for adults seeking to benefit from the education service (ACACE 1982:60). Since that time, opportunities have arisen to address some of these issues through governmental programmes at a European level designed to combat unemployment and poverty. Thus, schemes like the European Social Fund and European Programmes to Combat Poverty have channelled resources into adult education as well as vocational adult training. In particular, the European Commission's definition of poverty as 'social exclusion' offers a door for those seeking funds to develop access strategies through adult education.

Family-based learning schemes may, indeed, attract many adults back into the education service and counter the process of 'marginalisation' which is so often at the root of poverty. Taking the broad definition of literacy in our Introduction, we might read into the work of ACACE an extensive challenge for family initiatives:

"The public education service offers relatively little in the way of coherent practical programmes of parent and health education; and forms of education designed to enable people to understand complex political questions and the political process, to act as informed citizens in a democratic society, to fulfil important civic roles at work and in the community, are all far less well developed than in many other advanced countries."
(ACACE, 1982:175)

Such is the agenda for adult empowerment! Out of the critical and self-aware concern for everyday public issues as they daily connect with everyday private troubles, a family learning strategy may provide foundations for a system of popular education. In the meantime, we must seek out and refine suitable catalysts to bring about change. One possibility is the tactic of parent involvement.

Parent involvement as a catalyst

Parents have a 'dual interest' in education. Parent involvement is usually associated with the first concern of parents to offer support to their children in school. Much less often are parents recognised as having their own secondary needs as adults to benefit directly from the education service. This is equally parent involvement in education. Ironically, it is those parents with the greatest secondary need (often poor and described in the Russell Report as the 'minimally schooled') who require the most support and encouragement to involve themselves in the schooling of their children. Unless parents have confidence in their own ability, with resources at their disposal, then they cannot be much help to anyone else – including their children.

How, then, does this dual interest thesis enable us to construct a programme for family literacy? Each interest underpins a course of action which addresses key issues raised in this paper. Parents helping their children is a fundamental exercise in social engineering and, as we have seen has been incorporated into many government programmes of positive discrimination; whilst parents helping themselves is an increasingly recognised feature of adult education practice. A brief appraisal of different models of parent involvement will reveal the extent to which this dual interest is recognised as well as the degree to which family-based learning is facilitated.

For the moment, we shall consider models based on four relatively familiar parent roles in education as:

- consumer
- student
- manager
- partner

Parents as consumers

Here the 'domus' has been replaced as the focal point by the 'forum' as educational services are bought by parents in the market place. In this way, schooling is a commodity which is subject to the normal economic forces of supply and demand:

"... it becomes, for anyone who for any reason shares that parental interest, a mandate of the most elementary political prudence to strive to increase the influence of the parents – to shift the whole balance of power, in the education economy from the supply side to the demand side".
(Flew, 1987: 15)

The key unit of currency in this system is that of 'parental choice'. In a manner reminiscent of arguments expressed earlier in this paper, critics of consumerism concentrate on the dangers of narrow parochialism:

"Parental choice, by sanctifying parenthood as the ownership of children, treats children not as present or future citizens, with equal rights to education, but as the adjuncts to families which, in their social existences, have markedly unequal resources and powers."
(CCCS, 1981: 252)

Notwithstanding this fundamental controversy which has been fanned by the publication of the Parents Charter, consumerism has provided an invaluable dynamic in opening up the professional world of education to the laity. In particular, agencies like the Advisory Centre for Education have generated a wealth of literature and information on schooling which has gone straight into the home. Often drawing on the lessons learned in programmes like EPA, ACE has done much to generate a more enlightened educational public from which families might emerge with confidence to participate in learning initiatives as well as to help their children in school.

Parents as students

Not surprisingly, consumer awareness hs been a spur for many parents to return to education as students. However, with the emphasis often on legal rights, there is a danger that the pedagogy will be formal based on the transmission of given 'facts'. To avoid the excesses of a narrow vocational training approach, ways need to be found to replace the teacher-taught hierarchy with an egalitarian system of sharing information and experience. Such a framework based on dialogue rather than 'monologue' (to use Freire's terms) is more conducive to a programme of family literacy seeking to promote confidence and assertiveness.

One adult education organisation which has historically encouraged student responsibility for course development is the Workers' Educational Association. Set within community development objectives, the Newham Branch has organised a range of street level courses on topics including Learning Begins at Home, How the Council Works, Welfare Rights, Know Your Body, Assertiveness Skills, French and Kweyol, Women's Creative Writing and Governing Schools. Often with creches attached, many 'classes' have attracted family groups. Key factors in drawing such support have been childcare, venue, timing and recruitment of tutors from the neighbourhood.

Parents as managers

Reforms inspired by the Taylor Committee and the more recent introduction of Local Management of Schools have given major impetus to the involvement of parents at school governing body level. However, in areas of poverty and the minimally schooled, like the East End of London, the label of 'guvnor' is not an easy one to wear. Very considerable efforts need to be made to reduce the gulf between parent and representative. The Newham Parents' Centre is especially concerned to build bridges and give parent governors the confidence and competence to represent their constituents.

Even so, an advocacy role built on genuine solidarity between representative and represented is worth nurturing as part of a family literacy strategy. Significantly, it was the WEA Tutor in the Liverpool EPA Project who highlighted the potential for family-based learning in a school context:

"Formal 'parental education' was extremely difficult and viewed with some suspicion by local parents .... an atmosphere of parental involvement or interest in wider social issues was of more importance in the child's educational development than any direct parental assistance. It was felt that if such parents could turn their attention to the school system as a whole and give it the sort of critical appraisal they often give to other institutions, then the concept of a community school might become a reality."

[Lovett, 1975:23]

By combining the direct and indirect means of parent support, we arrive at the more ambitious model of parent involvement, namely : partnership.

Parents as partners

A crucial feature of the parent, pupil, teacher partnership in education is that each party brings a distinctive contribution. In seeking to define a parent support role in education, the Newham Parents' Centre characterised the parents status in the following two ways:

"1. a parent is the first generalist and the first volunteer: 2. a working class community is more familiar with the rigours of mutual self-help than with the traditions of individualistic 'service' ... in an inner-city area of urban industrial decline such as the East End Docklands Borough of Newham, parenthood endures as one major source of collective social esteem."

[NECSA, 1981]

Family literacy programmes sponsored by the Centre must necessarily take full account of this non-professional stance of the local parent.

The strategy adopted by the Centre in fostering parent partnership in education is expressed in the development of three integrated areas of service delivery – resources, guidance, training. Each is designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of parent involvement.

Resources strategy recognises that parents must have ready access to educational materials (old and new technologies) in order to deal confidently with the learning situation. A fully retailing Education Shop open six days a week with a broad range of stock, including literacy materials, is available for the resourcing of all initiatives. Apart from stock, the Shop provides neutral, friendly space in which sensitive educational issues can be explored.

Guidance strategy involves the promotion of a 24-hour Education Helpline, advice on educational opportunities and a programme of educational leaflets in community languages. Furthermore, parent advocacy services are available for families with children who have special educational needs. An additional feature of this strategy is a volunteer-intensive befriending and counselling service for adults.

Training strategy comprises a wide-reaching programme of adult basic education, pre-vocational and vocational training with generous creche support. An extensive, street-level outreach programme using small community sites is a key aspect of the scheme. Emphasis is placed on progression from small informal sessions to lengthy, part-time courses with national accreditation.

Already, the Centre has gained experience of running family literacy programmes under the title Parents

and Children Enjoy Reading (PACER). Enjoyment is the key in bringing the generations together with progression seen as an additional benefit. Parents have the chance to identify and prepare materials as well as determine the course of the programme. Opportunities also exist for parents and other volunteers to receive training in becoming tutors.

Undoubtedly, the most important feature of this three-fold strategy is that the Newham Parents' Centre is managed by local parents. In extending the partnership approach to more general family literacy initiatives, the same care will need to be taken to ensure that there is 'domestic', street-level accountability. Herein, lies empowerment!

Conclusion

This paper has set out to elucidate some of the issues attendant on developing schemes of family literacy in England. In particular, we have examined some of the policy initiatives that have affected the climate of opinion in recent years with regard to parent involvement. The parent contribution will be critical in any delivery of family-based learning especially in the areas of industrial decline on which we have focused.

Finally, some words of caution from a colleague, Letta Mashishi, with whom I worked for some memorable weeks in the Black Township of Soweto, South Africa. On several Sundays, I participated in school meetings of sixty to one hundred parents and children who were reading together to improve their English. The time was 8.30am and there were several dead black residents not far away from the shootings of the night before. No one was in a hurry to leave, and the parents and children were happy to take books home. Yet, as my memory fades, I still remember Letta's fear:

"Funding agencies are now trying to be too prescriptive. They would be better advised to listen to people on the ground. Viable structures at street-level need to be identified to avoid the danger of encouraging prescriptive handouts that last for no more than a year or two."

La lutte continue!

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Techniques in family literacy

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It took some teachers a little while to accept the value of really involving parents in children's learning. As parents progressed from the role of teacher's aide with menial tasks in school to that of home-based partner in helping children overcome learning difficulties, doubts were voiced in staff common rooms. What could parents offer that teachers could not?

The answer, of course, is – many things – in many areas of the curriculum. The first of these is simply the availability of extra practice – children who read (for instance) at home get more practice at reading than those who do not. It is well established that practice consolidates a skill, promotes fluency and minimises forgetting. The more you do it, the better you get and the more you want to do it. However, it is important that the practice is *positive* – i.e. is practice at reading *successfully*. Teachers have traditionally tried to keep error rates during reading in check by using carefully structured and graded reading schemes. But with close support from parents, it becomes possible for error rates to be kept low by the deployment of highly supportive tutoring techniques, coupled with carefully articulated correction procedures.

In a busy classroom, children receive relevant feedback about the correctness of their performance (e.g. their attempt to decode a particular word or figure out the meaning of a section of text) rather late and often in a less than clear manner. In the luxury of a one to one situation with a another family member, feedback can be immediate, preventing the compounding of error upon error. Of course, immediate feedback will only help if it is supportive and positive in nature. Certainly, detailed guidance about the nature of parental feedback, particularly at the point of an error, is essential to incorporate in all parental involvement programmes.

Children with learning difficulties by definition experience little success – they generate few opportunities for the teacher to meaningfully offer them praise. Teachers do not praise children as often as they would like to think they do, and the evidence suggests that natural rates of parental praise for children reading are a little lower than those of teachers, but not greatly so. In a parental involvement programme, great attention is usually given to the development and application of parental praise. This has the big advantage of being offered by someone who is a very major and important person in the child's life – certainly far more important than the teacher. A teacher figures in a child's life for less than a year, but parents are there more or less permanently, and have the advantage of association with tangible rewards! So the social reinforcement a parent dispenses for success can be more powerful than the teacher's attempts in the same direction, and can be given more frequently and regularly (if required) than a teacher can manage.

The fourth crucial advantage that a parent has as a tutor at home is much greater scope for modelling or demonstration of the required behaviour. Many children want to "be like" grown-ups, particularly the most significant grown-ups in their life, their parents. Thus where parents can demonstrate enthusiasm for books and appropriate and mature reading behaviour, the effect on the child is likely to be considerably more profound than that of innumerable verbal urgings in the classroom. Modelling is likely to be more powerful the more the child feels emotionally involved with, and wants to be like, the model. It follows that the father's role can be particularly crucial for boys, and one might assume that the greater incidence of reading failure in boys in elementary school is partially a result of the majority of elementary teachers being female, although the research evidence is equivocal on this point.

Thus, compared to teacher input, parental modelling is more powerful, parental reinforcement is more valuable and can be more frequent, parental feedback is more immediate, and practice is more regular. No wonder the literature on parents as educators of their own children is now so vast (c.f. Topping, 1986). The advantages of parental involvement are potentially so great that effective teachers deliberately allocate a significant proportion of their scarce professional time to increasing the quantity and quality of parental tutoring at home. No longer is it good enough to involve a few trusted female middle class parents as a token gesture – the need is to involve a large

cross-section of parents of all genders, colours, races, socio-economic classes and linguistic backgrounds – together with grandparents, siblings, all the rest of the family and friends and neighbours as well! To achieve this, teachers must acquire or develop a range of effective helping and tutoring strategies designed for use by non-professionals, which can be "given away" as part of the process of empowering the community to help itself.

It is clear that parents have many strengths on which tutoring systems can be designed to capitalise, and our previous discussion has alluded to some of the features necessary to engineer into any family literacy programme. Equally, good engineering implies the inbuilding of safety devices and routines, and care is required in this respect also. Certainly any attempt to get by in family literacy programmes by handing out restricted and watered down aspects of traditional teacher practice is doomed to failure in the long run.

Effective tutoring systems for family literacy must be extremely flexible and capable of wide application at the initiative of family members. All kinds of tutoring constellations will spring up once a family has been empowered – father might tutor son who then tutors mother who then feels able to tutor younger daughter except on the hard bits where son takes over, for instance. Given this requirement, it is clear that tutoring systems which are dependent on specific educational materials or equipment are unlikely to truly empower – they will be too expensive, too restricted in scope and interest and always too like a welfare handout, risking creating dependency. The real challenge is to design tutoring systems which can be used by anyone, anywhere, with any material which is to hand and is of interest.

This may sound kind of challenging, but is certainly possible. In this paper three such systems will be described: Paired Reading, Cued Spelling and Paired Writing. In each case the method will be elaborated, its organisation in practice detailed and research evidence on effectiveness briefly summarised.

Paired Reading (PR)

Method

The child chooses high interest reading material irrespective of its readability level, from school, the community library or home. Newspapers and magazines are fine. There is no requirement to finish the book, but if children keep changing in midstream maybe they need to take more care choosing.

Families commit themselves to an initial trial period in which they agree to do at least 5 minutes Paired Reading on 5 days each week for about 8 weeks. This time can be found in any part of the day and the frequency of usage enables them to become fluent in the method and is sufficient for them to begin to see some change in the child's reading. Grandparents, siblings, friends and neighbours can be encouraged to help, but must all use the same technique – the target child is deliberately asked to quality control the tutoring they receive.

The usual advice about finding a relatively quiet and comfortable place applies. It is important that both members of the pair can see the book equally easily – parents who get neck-ache get irritable! Likewise, the usual advice about talking about the book (or whatever it is) applies, but in Paired Reading the child is more likely to want to talk about a book **they** have chosen and talk is also more necessary given the (probably) greater difficulty of the text, as a check on comprehension.

A very simple and ubiquitously applicable correction procedure is prescribed. When the child says a word wrong, the tutor just tells the child the correct way to say the word, has the child repeat it correctly and the pair carry on. Saying "No!" and giving phonic or any other prompts is forbidden. However, tutors do not jump in and put the word right straight away – the rule is that tutors pause and give the child 4 or 5 seconds to see if they will put it right all by themselves. (The exception to this rule is with the sprint reader, who 5 seconds after making an error could be three lines along and have made more errors – in this case earlier intervention and a finger point from the tutor to guide racing eyes back to the error word is necessary.)

Praise for good reading is essential. Tutors must **look** pleased as well as saying "good" and other positive things. Praise is particularly required for good reading of hard words, getting all the words in a sentence right and putting wrong words right before the tutor does (self-correction). Nagging, fussing and complaining are forbidden, but PR does not rely on negative commands for effectiveness — these undesirable behaviours are engineered out by engineering in incompatible positive behaviours.

So how is the child going to manage this difficult book she/he has chosen? Tutors support children through difficult text by **reading together** – both members of the pair read all the words out loud together, with the tutor modulating their speed to match that of the child, while giving a good model of competent reading. The child must read every word and errors are corrected as above.

When an easier section of text is encountered, the child may wish to read a little without support. Tutor and tutee agree on a way for the child to signal for the tutor to stop reading together. This could be a knock, a sign or a squeeze. When the child signals, the tutor stops reading out loud right away while praising the child for being so confident. Sooner or later while **reading alone** the child will make an error which they cannot self-correct within 4 or 5 seconds. Then the tutor applies the usual correction procedure **and** joins back in **reading together**.

The pair go on like this, switching from reading together to reading alone to give the child just as much help as is needed at any moment, according to the difficulty of the text, how tired the tutee is, and so on. Children should never 'grow out of' reading together; they should always be ready to use it as they move on to harder and harder books.

The framework of the technique is outlined in Figure 1. Of course there is nothing new about it – some elements of longstanding practice have merely been put together in a particularly successful package. A few teachers have difficulty accepting the technique

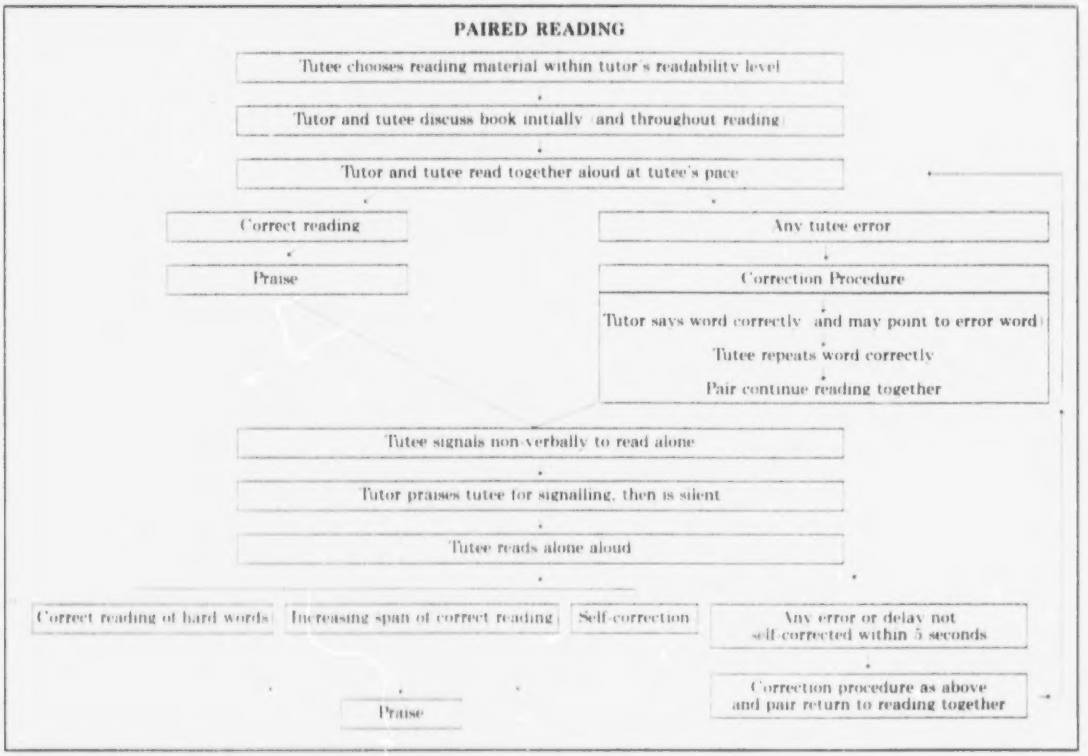
PAIRED READING
Tutee chooses reading material within tutor's readability level
Tutor and tutee discuss book initially (and throughout reading)
Tutor and tutee read together aloud at tutee's pace
Correct reading
Praise
Any tutee error
Correction Procedure
Tutor says word correctly (and may point to error word)
Tutee repeats word correctly
Pair continue reading together
Tutee signals non-verbally to read alone
Tutor praises tutee for signalling, then is silent
Tutee reads alone aloud
Correct reading of hard words
Increasing span of correct reading
Self-correction
Any error or delay not self-corrected within 5 seconds
Correction procedure as above and pair return to reading together
Praise

Figure 1: *Paired reading*

for philosophical reasons. Forget that, just try it. Remember PR does not constitute the whole reading curriculum, but is designed to complement it without interfering with it. Further details will be found in Topping and Wolfendale (1985).

Organisation

PR is widely used with children of all reading abilities and it makes sense to try it out initially on a range of students rather than attempt to solve all your worst reading problems overnight. This will also help to avoid stigmatisation of your first effort. Choose a small group of fairly well motivated families to practise on, but not so small or scattered that there is no sense of group solidarity or togetherness (around ten would be good). Ensure that the children have easy and frequent access to a wide range of books available for taking home.

Invite parents (and all other potential tutors) to a launch or training meeting, together with the children who will be the tutees, since pairs are trained together from the outset. At this meeting, after an introduction designed to create an air of novelty and excitement (some people like to put on a little play about how NOT to do reading at home), training in the technique commences. Tell the group about the basic structure of the technique **and** give a demonstration of how to do it. The demonstration can be on video, live by role play between teachers or by a teacher with user-friendly child, or by a graduate pair from a previous programme. Demonstrate reading together and reading alone separately to start with, then in normal alternation. Take especial care to highlight the correction procedure, the 4-5 second pause and lots of praise.

Now have the pairs go right ahead and practise the technique, offering them necessary space and privacy. Remember that to practise reading together at all sensibly the pair will need a book above the child's current independent readability level, so it is highly desirable to have the tutees choose books for the practice in school before the meeting so you can keep an eye on this. Left to themselves, the children will choose easy books for the purpose of making a good impression! As the pairs practice, circulate to diplomatically check on technique, offering further advice, coaching or re-demonstration with the individual child where necessary – and don't forget the praise! Remember that you can't advise or coach unless you have tried out the technique yourself on a few tame children.

After the practice, feed back your observations to the group, take questions, outline the day to day operation of the project, and offer refreshments if appropriate. Pairs should keep a PR Diary, noting the date, what was read, for how long, with whom and any comments about how well the child did. Some parents have trouble thinking what to write in the last column, so some schools provide them with a dictionary of praise – children are always happy to offer suggestions for this. The diary should be taken into school each week by the child to show the teacher, who should add their own positive comment and sign the card officially, perhaps also issuing a new one for

the next week. This is a means for the child to get a double dose of praise – and is also a mutual accountability device, of course. You will also need to advise pairs about the different places from which they may borrow books. Give pairs an easy read handout to remind them of the technique and to show to other family members (this may need to be in more than one language). Some schools offer Paired Reading badges, balloons, and other such nonsense beloved by children – all helping to advertise the programme. You may wish to have the pairs contract into the programme more or less formally.

When discussing diaries with children in the ensuing weeks, check if all is going well. If it is not, you may wish to call the family into school for a brief conference about the programme and to see if they are still 'doing it right'. If you can find the time, a home visit is even better. In all cases have the pair show you how they are doing it and check the difficulty level of the books chosen (these may be consistently too hard or too easy).

After the initial period of commitment, gather the pairs together again for a feedback meeting. Tell them how you think things have gone and seek their opinions on the technique and organisation of the project. Some present will say little and some will not attend, so you might also wish to have feedback questionnaires for the participants (see Topping & Whiteley 1990 for examples). You might wish to test the children's reading before and after the project so you can feed back the overall results to the group, but avoid giving out individual scores to parents as one score is unlikely to accurately reflect the complexity of what has occurred. You might want to offer the group further tangible indicators of the school's approval at this point.

The main purpose of the meeting is to regenerate enthusiasm and group cohesion, since you do not want anyone to think this is "the end". Encourage each family to say where they want to go from here: go on with PR 5 days a week, go on but only 2-3 days a week, go on with reading at home but in a different way, or stop for a rest and perhaps start again later. Children may wish to go on keeping the diary and you will have to decide how often you can find time to see this in the longer run.

Effectiveness

Paired Reading has been the subject of a very large amount of research, starting in the UK and now internationally, and this has recently been reviewed by Topping & Lindsay (1992).

Much of the evaluation has been in terms of gains on norm-referenced tests of reading before and after the initial intensive period of involvement. Published studies do not always reflect the reality of ordinary life in the classroom, but with PR it is possible to compare the results of 60 published (and therefore selected) studies of projects with outcome data from 155 unselected projects operated in one school district. In the published studies, involving a total of 1012 children, for each month of time passed the average Paired Reader gained 4.2 months in reading age for accuracy and 5.4 months for comprehension. In the 155 unselected projects, involving 2372 children, for each month of time passed the average Paired Reader gained 3.3 months in reading age for accuracy and 4.4 months for comprehension.

Of the published studies, 19 included control or comparison groups, while of the unselected projects, 37 included control groups. Although the control groups often also made gains greater than would normally be expected, the PR groups on aggregate did far better, although the differential was greater in the selected projects.

But do these gains last? Published reports on five projects with follow-up data are available, but of the unselected projects 17 included such evidence. In the latter, up to 17 weeks after the initial project intensive period, 102 children in 7 projects were still gaining over 2 months of reading age per chronological month elapsed for both accuracy and comprehension. At longer term follow-up, 170 children in 10 projects were still gaining well over 1 month of reading age per month elapsed in both accuracy and comprehension. Thus it seems that while the initial startling acceleration does not continue indefinitely, the gains certainly do not 'wash out' subsequently, and follow-up data from control group projects confirms this (Topping, 1992).

The data from the unselected projects further suggested that well-organised projects yielded better test results, that participant children from lower socio-economic classes tended to show higher gains, that home visiting by teachers increased test scores and that boys tended to accelerate more than girls. Also, second language Paired Readers accelerated more than first language Paired Readers in accuracy but less in comprehension (while of course accelerating a great deal more than non-Paired Readers of either type).

Taking another approach to evaluation, the subjective views of parents, children and teachers in the unselected projects have also been gathered, by structured questionnaire enabling responses to be summarised (Topping & Whiteley 1990). In a sample of over 1000 parents, after PR 70% considered their child was now reading more accurately, more fluently and with better comprehension. Greater confidence in reading was noted by 78% of parents. Teachers reported better reading in the classroom in a somewhat smaller proportion of cases (about 8% less). Of a sample of 964 children, 95% felt that after PR they were better at reading and 92% liked reading more. Eighty-seven per cent found it easy to learn to do, 83% liked doing it and 70% said they would go on doing it.

Paired Reading has also been used in an Adult Literacy context, with spouses, friends, neighbours and workmates acting as tutors. The advantages of being able to use more appropriate and more readily available reading material and receive tutoring on a little and often basis closely linked to everyday life are extremely important, especially for the majority of adults with literacy difficulties who cannot or will not attend a class.

Scoble, Topping and Wigglesworth (1988) reported the evaluation of a six-week project of this type,

noting average gains of 10.4 months in reading age for accuracy and 13 months for comprehension for those students who could register on the scale at pre-test. On miscue analysis, most tutees showed a striking increase in self-correction. Once PR is applied in a more complex family literacy context, it soon becomes very difficult to evaluate, since there are problems establishing who is doing what and with which and to whom.

Cued Spelling (CS)

Method

The basic structure of the technique comprises 10 Steps, 4 Points to Remember and 2 Reviews, as illustrated in Figure 2. The 10 Steps and 4 Points apply to every individual target word worked upon by the pair, while the 'Speed Review' covers all target words for a particular session and the 'Mastery Review' covers all the target words for one week or a longer period if desired.

CUED SPELLING
1. Speller chooses word
2. Check right spelling, put in diary
3. Read the word – together and alone
4. Chooses Cues
5. Say Cues together
6. Speller says Cues, Helper writes word
7. Helper says Cues, Speller writes word
8. Speller says Cues and writes word
9. Speller writes word fast
10. Speller reads word
Remember
Helper covers previous tries
Speller checks own try
If try is wrong, do step before again
Helper praises
Each day – Speed Review
Speller writes all words for day just said (checks)
Wrong words – do 10 steps again
Each week – Mastery Review
Speller writes all words for week just said (checks)
Decide what to do about wrong words

Figure 2: *The ten steps*

The child (tutee) chooses high interest target words irrespective of complexity (Step 1). The pair check the spelling of the word, put a master version in their Cued Spelling Diary and usually also add it to the top of a piece of paper on which subsequent attempts will be made. The pair then read the word out loud synchronously, then the child reads the word aloud alone, ensuring tutee capability of accurate reading and articulation of the word.

The child then chooses Cues (prompts or reminders) to enable him or her to remember the written structure of the word. These Cues may be phonic sounds, letter names, syllables or other fragments or 'chunks' of words, or wholly idiosyncratic mnemonic devices. Tutees are encouraged to consider and choose Cues which fit well with their own cognitive structures, i.e. make sense and are memorable **to them**. Thus, although a parent (tutor) might make suggestions or stimulate imagination, the decision on Cueing rests wholly with the child.

Once Cues are decided upon, the pair say the Cues out loud simultaneously (Step 5). The tutee then says the Cues out loud while the tutor writes the word down on scrap paper to this 'dictation' – thus the tutee is provided with a demonstration or model of the required behaviour. At Step 7, the tutor says the Cues out loud while the tutee writes the word down. At Step 8, the tutee says the Cues and writes the word simultaneously.

At Step 9, the tutee is required by the tutor to write the word as fast as possible (the tutee may or may not decide to recite the Cues out loud at this Step, but may well recite them sub-vocally). At Step 10, the tutee again reads the word out loud as a reminder of the meaningful context in which the target word hopefully has remained embedded.

The 4 Points cover aspects of the technique relevant to its practical application. At every attempt at writing a target word, the tutor is required to cover up previous attempts on the work paper, to avoid the possibility of direct copying, although in fact some tutees prefer to do this themselves. Every time there is a written attempt on a target word, the **tutee** checks the attempt and the tutor only intervenes if the tutee proves unable to check his or her own attempt accurately.

If tutees have written a word incorrectly, they are encouraged to cross it out very vigorously to assist its deletion from their memory. At an incorrect attempt, the correction procedure is merely that the pair return to the Step preceding the one at which the error was made. Tutors are required to praise at various junctures which are specified quite clearly. These precise details of the nature of praise and the criteria for its application are intended to promote higher frequency and regularity of praise, as well as more effective use of it.

At the end of each tutoring session, there is a 'Speed Review', wherein the tutor requires the tutee to write all the target words for that session as fast as possible from dictation in random order. The tutee then self-checks all the words with the 'master version' in the Cued Spelling Diary. Target words which are incorrect at Speed Review have the 10 Steps applied again, perhaps with the choice of different Cues. In fact, tutees make only a small proportion of errors at Speed Review and the requirement to re-apply the 10 Steps is not as onerous as it sounds.

At the end of each week, a 'Mastery Review' is conducted, wherein the tutee is required to write all the target words for the whole week as fast as possible in random order. No specific error correction procedure is prescribed for Mastery Review and it is left to the pair to negotiate for themselves what they wish to do about errors. Many pairs choose to include failed words in the next week's target words.

The technique has been designed and structured to

be highly interactive, but in operation presents as democratic rather than didactic. It is intended to provide a framework to "scaffold" self-managed learning. There is good evidence that spellers naturalistically use a great variety of strategies in a highly idiosyncratic manner, so any **requirement** to use a specific mnemonic strategy ubiquitously is likely merely to further inhibit an already poor speller. Also, there is evidence that when children select their own spelling words, they tend to choose more difficult words but are as successful as with easier words chosen by adults. Work on mnemonic strategies has emphasised the importance of meaningfulness to the subject (see Oxley & Topping, 1990, for relevant references). Thus the Cued Spelling technique fits in well with recent trends towards individualised and self-governed learning of spelling skills.

Cued Spelling features swift error correction and support procedures, in the hope of eliminating the fear of failure. It is flexible and appropriate for a wide age and ability range. The self-selection of target words and self-management of many of the procedures is designed to increase motivation. It incorporates modelling and praise. The Steps are finely task-analysed (are in small incremental stages), to reduce frustration on very difficult words – but they can be worked through very quickly on easier words. The nature of the activity should ensure high levels of time on task. The emphasis in the later stages of the technique on speeded performance is of course drawn from the concept of 'fluency' found in precision teaching. This aspect is included to promote generalisation over time and contexts, since otherwise there is a danger that the tutee will merely have learned spelling 'tricks' while continuing to spell the same words incorrectly in the course of subsequent continuous free writing. While the method may seem complex on first reading, seven-year-old children have been successfully trained in its use in about one hour.

Organisation

Cued Spelling projects follow many of the organisational guidelines for Paired Reading projects. Parents and children are trained together. A talk on the method is best accompanied with a demonstration on video, since a live demonstration of CS often lacks clarity of small detail and tends to be less successful. An additional practical demonstration of Cueing using a chalkboard and soliciting from the group different words and different cueing strategies for each word is helpful in making the point that there are no "right" cueing strategies, only effective and ineffective ones. Pairs are given a '10 Steps' chart (see Figure 2) to refer to while practising the method with the child's own words (chosen before the meeting), using the paper, pencils and dictionaries provided. Individualised feedback and further coaching is provided as necessary.

Cued Spelling Diaries are given to each pair, each page including space to write the master version of up to 10 words on all days of the week, together with boxes to record daily Speed Review and weekly Mastery Review scores and spaces for comments from tutor (daily) and teacher (weekly). The pair are asked to use the technique on about five words per day (implying a minimum time of 15 minutes) for 3 days per week for the next 6 weeks. The children are encouraged to choose words from their school spelling books, graded free writing, relevant project work or special Cued Spelling displays of common problem words, and collect these (in a CS "collecting book"), so they always have a pool of suitable words from which to choose.

Tutees are asked to bring their CS Diaries into school once each week for the class teacher to view. Keep watch on the words chosen, since some children choose words they already know while others choose extremely difficult words of very doubtful utility – in this case you might need to prescribe a formula of "3 for everyday use and 2 just for fun". Participating children might receive a badge and parents a higher readability information sheet with further ideas on Cueing.

As Cued Spelling has been much used in a reciprocal peer tutoring format, its use in family literacy in situations where both members of the pair are of equal spelling ability is entirely possible, although it is then especially important that the master version of the word is looked up in the dictionary **and** copied correctly into the CS Diary. Thus a parent who is of limited spelling ability could work with their child of similar spelling ability or sibling tutoring could operate between children of similar or different ages. In reciprocal tutoring, the fact that everyone gets to be a tutor is good for the self-esteem of both members of the pair, who of course end up learning their partner's words as well as their own.

Effectiveness

The initial reports on Cued Spelling were of a descriptive nature. Emerson (1988) reported on a brief project using the technique with four parents who tutored their own children at home. Results at Mastery Review were excellent. Scoble (1988) reported a detailed case study of an adult literacy student tutored by his wife using the technique. After ten weeks of Cued Spelling, a Mastery Review of all words covered in the preceding weeks yielded a success rate of 78%. Subsequently, Scoble (1989) reported on the progress of fourteen similar pairs, most of whom had done Paired Reading together first. The most long-standing student had used the method for over a year and usually achieved Speed Review scores of 100% and Mastery Review scores of 90%. Harrison (1989) reported on a similar project and its extension to peer tutoring between adult literacy students in a class situation.

In the event, however, the most popular application of Cued Spelling then proved to be in a peer tutoring format. Oxley & Topping (1990) reported on a project in which 8 seven and eight-year-old pupils were tutored by 8 nine-year-old pupils in the same vertically grouped class in a small rural school. This cross-age, cross-ability peer tutoring project was found to yield striking social benefits and the children spontaneously generalised peer tutoring to other curricular areas. Subjective feedback from both tutors and tutees was

very positive. The self-concept as a speller of both tutees and tutors showed a marked positive shift compared to that of non-participant children, especially so for the tutees. After six weeks, a total Mastery Review of **all** target words yielded average scores of 66% correct, but a test session of up to 92 items for such young children was considered of doubtful reliability. Results on two norm-referenced tests of spelling were equivocal, since although the scores of both tutees and tutors were strikingly improved at post-test, so were those of non- participant children in the same class.

Peer tutored Cued Spelling in a class-wide, same-age, same-ability reciprocal tutoring format was reported by Brierley, Hutchinson, Topping & Walker (1989). All pupils in the three first year mixed ability classes (aged 9 to 10 years) in a Middle school participated. Tutor and tutee roles changed each week. All the children were trained in a single group meeting. After six weeks, a total Mastery Review of all words covered yielded average scores of 80%. On a norm-referenced test of spelling, the average gain for all children was 0.65 years of spelling age during the six-week project, certainly many times more than normal expectations. Subjective feedback from the children was very positive, 84% of the children reporting feeling they were better spellers after the project. Subsequently, peer tutored Cued Spelling was initiated by a number of schools, especially in the reciprocal tutoring format, but few found time to evaluate it. A study of parent tutored Cued Spelling with children of eight years of age and of the normal range of spelling ability (France, Topping & Revell, 1992) indicated that the intervention appeared to be effective in differentially raising the spelling attainments of participants as compared to non-participants who were more able spellers, at least in the short term. Children felt Cued Spelling was easy to learn to do and that it improved their spelling along a number of dimensions. However, they said they tended to become bored with it and had difficulty finding enough words with which to use the technique.

It can be argued that any method involving extra time on task at spelling and extra valuable parental attention and approval related to speiling might be likely to yield differential gains. A study by Watt & Topping (1992) compared Cued Spelling with traditional spelling homework (an alternative intervention involving equal tutor attention and equal time on spelling tasks), compared the relative effectiveness of parent and peer tutored Cued Spelling and assessed the generalisation of the effect of Cued Spelling into subsequent continuous free writing. On a norm-referenced spelling test, Cued Spellers gained over two months of spelling age for each chronological month elapsed, while the traditional spelling homework comparison group of more able spellers gained only half a month of spelling age per month. The average score for parent tutored children at final Mastery Review of words used in the programme was 93% correct. Parent and peer tutoring seemed equally effective.

Participating children returned questionnaires identical to those used by Oxley & Topping (1990). Of these, 56% found it easy to think up good Cues while the rest thought it hard, but 87% now felt happier about spelling in general and that their spelling was better when writing, while 83% felt they now did better at spelling tests. Ninety-one per cent reported a higher rate of self-correction after doing Cued Spelling and the same proportion said they liked doing Cued Spelling, while 87% said they wished to go on doing Cued Spelling. Parents returned feedback questionnaires and 88% reported a higher rate of self-correction, confirming the feedback from the children, while 58% reported noticing their children spontaneously generalise the use of Cued Spelling techniques to other words. Three of the four teachers involved noted higher rates of self-correction of spelling in classwork and a general improvement in free writing.

Pre-post analysis of written work was based on samples of writing from Cued Spellers and comparison children. The average number of spelling errors per page reduced from 8.5 to 4.62 for the Cued Spellers and from 3.7 to 2.1 for the comparison children, who clearly had a lower error rate to start with and thus had less room for improvement. Generally, all but one of the participants and all but one of the comparison children were adjudged to have improved in quality of written work (one would of course expect children in school to improve over time), but the CS group recorded an average of 1.7 specific improvements per child while the comparison group averaged 1.25.

Paired Writing

Method

Writing can be a lonely business and a blank piece of paper waiting to be filled strangely daunting. Paired Writing is a framework for a pair working together to generate (or co-compose) a piece of writing for any purpose they wish. The guidelines are designed to structure interaction between the pair so that a higher proportion of time is spent on task – hopefully reducing dithering, head-scratching, staring out of the window and blind panic to a minimum.

There is great emphasis on continuity – the pair stimulating each other to keep going at any threatened hiatus. There is also constant inbuilt feedback and cross-checking – what is written must make sense to both members of the pair. The system is designed to be supportive and eliminate the fear of failure. Anxiety about peripheral aspects of writing such as spelling or punctuation should thereby be reduced to an appropriate level, and dealt with in an orderly way. As the "best copy" is a joint effort of the pair, criticism as well as praise from external evaluators is shared.

Peer evaluation is incorporated, relieving the supervising professional of the burden of grading innumerable scripts after the event (sometimes so long after that the feedback given is totally ineffective). Research shows that peer evaluation is at least as effective as teacher evaluation.

Paired Writing usually operates with a more able writer (the helper) and a less able one (the Writer) in the pair, but can work with a pair of equal ability so long as they edit carefully and use a dictionary to check spellings. In this latter case, it is possible to

reciprocate roles from time to time to add variety – however, this should not be too frequent and the two roles should always be kept clearly separate.

The system may be used in creative writing or English composition, or in descriptive or technical writing, or as part of cross-curricular work, employment or other life needs. A Paired Writing project may be designed to mesh in with, or follow on from, direct instruction from a professional teacher on structural aspects of the writing process or a Paired Reading or Cued Spelling project, but the method may equally be used on an ad hoc basis as the need arises once pairs are trained and practised in its use.

The structure of the system consists of 6 Steps, 10 Questions (Ideas), 5 Stages (Drafting) and 4 Levels (Editing), and is outlined in Figure 3. Helpers should not be overly didactic, nor **too** supportive. Helpers are there to help Writers to help themselves, not to do everything for them. As there are no "right answers" about what constitutes good writing, Helpers should avoid direct criticism of the Writer's efforts, but instead make comments about their own subjective reaction, e.g. "I find that bit hard to understand – can we think of a clearer way to write it?" More praise for good bits than comment on doubtful bits is the rule, and praise must be given at least at the end of each step.

Step 1 is Ideas Generation. The Helper stimulates ideas by raising the stimulus words listed under Questions with the Writer, not necessarily in the order listed. As the Writer responds, the Helper makes one-word notes. As this proceeds, the helper might recapitulate previous ideas before presenting the next stimulus word. The Helper might also think up new stimulus words not listed.

Step 2 is Drafting. The notes should then be placed where both members of the pair can easily see them. Drafting then proceeds without concern for either spelling or punctuation. However, legibility is desirable, as is double spaced writing to allow for subsequent editing. Most pairs will do better with lined paper. The Writer considers the notes and dictates, sentence by sentence, what he or she wishes to communicate. Generally a pair will choose one of the five Stages of Support to operate in for the session. For a 'harder' piece of writing, they are likely to choose a low (numbered) Stage, for an 'easier' assignment a higher (numbered) Stage. However, they might go back one stage (or more) when encountering a particularly hard bit. In any event, if the Writer cannot proceed within 10 seconds, the Helper must go back a stage on that problem word to give more support. There is a great emphasis on keeping going and not getting bogged down. Keeping going with more support is better than struggling for a long time with less support.

Step 3 is Reading. The Helper then reads the draft out loud, with as much expression and attention to punctuation (real or imagined) as possible, while the pair look at the text together. The Writer then reads the text out loud. If a word is read incorrectly, the Helper says that word correctly for the Writer.

Step 4 is Editing. The pair look at the draft together and the writer considers where she he thinks improvements are necessary. The problem word, phrase or sentence might be lightly marked with coloured pen, pencil or highlighter. The most

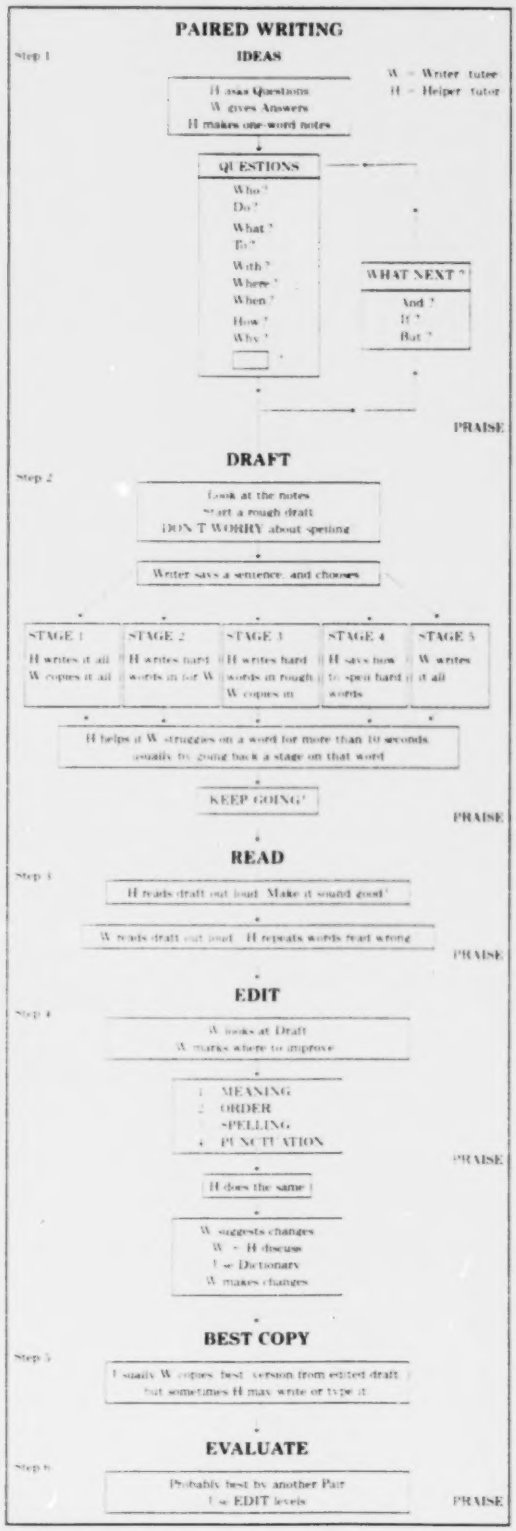

Figure 3: *Paired writing.*

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important criterion of need for improvement is where Meaning is unclear. The second most important is to do with the organisation of ideas within the text or the Order in which meanings are presented, whether phrases or sentences. The next consideration is whether Spellings are correct and the last whether Punctuation is helpful and correct.

The Helper praises the Writer for completion of this demanding task, then marks any areas they feel the Writer has "missed", while bearing in mind the subjective nature of some aspects of "quality" in writing. The Writer then suggests changes, the pair discuss the best correction to make, and when agreement is reached the new version is inserted in the text (preferably by the Writer). Spellings over which there is the slightest doubt in the pair should be referred to the dictionary.

Step 5 is Best Copy. The Writer (usually) then copies out a 'neat' or 'best' version of the corrected draft. Sometimes the Helper may write or type or word-process the piece, however, depending on the skill and stamina of the Writer.

Step 6 is Evaluate. The pair should inspect and consider the best copy. Given the effort they have expended, they are likely to think their co-composed text is really rather good, and be happy to congratulate each other as members of a successful composing duet. However, external evaluation by more objective assessors is highly desirable. Peer evaluation is a useful mutual learning experience, and assessment by another pair can proceed by reference to the criteria encompassed in the Edit levels, again hopefully with positive comments outnumbering negative.

As with Paired Reading, there is nothing new in this, including as it does many of the traditional elements of process writing. More complex versions with more Editing options have been developed for older children, but these are not appropriate for those with learning difficulties.

Organisation

For training purposes (and indeed subsequently) each pair must have a system flowchart, two pens or pencils, scrap paper, easy access to a dictionary of an appropriate level and good quality paper for the best copy. Most pairs will do best with lined paper. It is recommended that the use of erasers is strongly discouraged. A coloured pen or pencil for editing might be found helpful.

At a training meeting participants should sit at tables in their pairs, with a hard copy of the flowchart (Figure 3, which could also be projected. Talking through the flowchart should as always be accompanied by a demonstration of the system in operation, and the most visible way of doing this is usually by live role play between teachers writing on an acetate sheet which is continuously projected. Practice, monitoring and coaching follow. You may choose to specify some simple topic for all pairs for the practice, which should be common to all and preferably functional, e.g. 'how to use a coin-operated telephone' or 'how you should brush your teeth'. Allow at least 40 minutes and preferably one hour for the meeting.

After training, the system will need to be used as frequently as possible for the next few weeks, to ensure consolidation and promote fluency in its use and enable any problems to be picked up. An informal contract regarding minimum frequency of usage should be established – e.g. Paired Writing for 3 sessions of 20 minutes per week for 6 weeks – and this can be tied in with regular homework requirements.

Effectiveness

To date, the evaluations of Paired Writing have been solely descriptive and anecdotal. The task of evaluating quantitative and qualitative change in children's writing is an enormously time-consuming undertaking from a research point of view, and the difficulty of checking if any changes endure in the longer term even greater.

The objective of parent tutored Paired Writing is to produce an increase in the quality and quantity of written outputwhich generalises to the solo writing situation and endures over time. Along the way parent writing skills may also improve. Where tutors are siblings, a more complex issue arises – is the final product better than if the members of the pair worked separately? If the abilities of the two are very disparate, this may not be the case, and the altruism of brothers and sisters is rarely infinite.

Most of the usage of Paired Writing since its recent inception has been on a same-age cross-ability peer tutoring basis in schools with classes of mixed ability students. In this situation, it is clearly important that the ambitious objective of joint written products - being better than either member of the pair could create alone is achieved, or a reversion to traditional solo writing in isolation is inevitable given the accountability demands of the education system. Gratifyingly, in a majority of cases this is exactly what happens, and students mostly prefer the sociability and supportiveness of Paired Writing to the traditional approach. Parent tutored Paired Writing has so far been largely confined to parents worried about their child's learning difficulties, although the interpretation of learning difficulty has been wide, so that the method has been used with university students by parents worried about upcoming examination performances, for instance. The author would welcome information about any Paired Writing projects.

Designing Tutoring Systems

There is now an ever expanding wealth of knowledge and experience about systems for tutoring by non-professionals and from this it is possible to distil a checklist of engineering criteria likely to maximise success. Those educators inventing their own local procedures may find this helpful.

Objectives – what benefits the programme is expected to have should be clearly articulated, not least for marketing/recruitment and subsequent evaluation purposes. The programme must not interfere with the regular school curriculum, but should dovetail into it, while capitalising on the qualitative differences and advantages of family literacy tutoring as compared to school instruction.

Keep the objectives modest for your first attempt.

Ability differential – be clear with potential volunteers (and yourself) about the degree of ceiling competence needed in the tutor and the feasible range of ability differential (if any) in the pair. If tutor competence is in doubt there must be reference to some acceptable master source to verify correctness, since overlearning of errors would leave the tutee worse off than when they started.

Flexibility – procedures should be applicable without major modification to participants of different ages and abilities with different life situations and needs, different learning styles and different ambitions, and in different physical environments. Clearly, the more specific materials are deemed to be necessary, the less these flexibility requirements are likely to be met. Likewise, the procedure should enable and facilitate the tutee to deploy a range of strategies, rather than strait-jacketing them into a single professionally preferred one. Activity should preferably be varied and multi-sensory, with alternation between different styles of reading, listening, writing, speaking, and so on.

Interaction – procedures should involve responsive (inter-) activity from both members of the pair, since if one declines into being merely a checker or passive audience motivation will soon evaporate. The procedure should promote a high rate of time on task, with an emphasis on keeping going – maintaining the flow of activity increases the number of learning opportunities and helps stave off anxiety.

Satisfaction – likewise, both members of the pair must gain some intrinsic satisfaction from the activity, since pure parental altruism will always expire eventually through boredom. Basically, it's got to be fun.

Self-management – the tutee should have a substantial degree of control over the process of tutoring and preferably over the curriculum content and materials as well. Tutee control of the amount of support offered by the tutor is especially valuable. Tutees should be able to exercise choice and initiative – deprived of the opportunity, they will never develop the skills.

Instructions – should be simple, clear and above all **specific**. Instructions are probably best given as a series of finely task analysed steps. Parents like to be told what they have to do to be right, at least at the start. Mostly they dislike wordy educational philosophising and vague and fuzzy open-ended statements. Both tutor and tutee should be given very clear (interactive) job descriptions, since without this the process of tutoring can rapidly degenerate into a muddle. The provision of a simple visual map, chart or other cue to remind the pair of how it is all supposed to work may well be helpful.

Materials – especially for children with learning difficulties, the curriculum materials in use should be individualised to match the tutee's needs and interests, but are they to be completely free choice, controlled choice from ranges of difficulty or precisely specified by the professionals, or some continuum of these as the tutoring develops? Are the materials required actually available and easy for regular access by pairs? Does the tutoring procedure accommodate to progression onto increasingly difficult materials? Have you specified what the pair will need to have available by way of basic equipment (pen, paper, dictionary?), and ensured it will be available?

Error control – the tutee should not feel as if they are making many errors, since this is bad for morale. If this is not controlled via tutee-, tutor- or teacher-selected materials, careful accommodation by the tutor to the tutee's natural pacing and the provision of swift non-intrusive support must be a feature of the tutoring technique, without creating tutee dependency. Errors are potentially the major stress point in the tutoring relationship – but be alert to other possible causes of stress and fatigue in the system.

Error signalling – when an error is made, feedback should be swift that this is the case, but not so immediate that the tutee has no opportunity to detect the error themselves. Error signalling should be positive and minimally interruptive.

Error correction – a swift, simple, specific and preferably ubiquitously applicable error correction procedure must be clearly laid down, which is seen by the tutee as supportive and draws minimum attention to the error. There should be a strong emphasis on self-checking and self-correction, both higher order skills which need to be fostered. In a more general global sense, peer evaluation could be incorporated.

Eliminate negatives – "don't say don't" – prescribe positive error signalling and correction procedures which are incompatible with the negative and intrusive behaviours we all sometimes perpetrate, rather than giving tutors a list of prohibited behaviours.

Accentuate positives – be specific about requirements for praise, including what to praise (especially self-correction and initiative-taking), frequency, verbal and non-verbal aspects, and the need for variety and relevance to the task. Deploy individual token or tangible rewards only if all else fails. Some group acknowledgement of participation via badges, certificates, etc might be valuable and acceptable, and is useful advertising.

Discussion – emphasise that discussion by the pair is essential to promote and confirm full understanding by the tutee, and is genuine work, to avoid mechanical conformity to the surface requirements of the task by either member of the pair.

Modelling – ensure the tutoring procedure includes a demonstration of competence by the tutor which may be imitated (or improved upon) by the tutee, rather than over-reliance on verbal promptings. Tutors should also be encouraged to model more general desirable behaviours, such as enthusiasm for the topic in hand. Participant pairs will also serve as models for other pairs, and the project group should deliberately be kept in contact so that the social dynamic adds a further dimension to motivation. Remember the co-ordinating professional must model continuing enthusiasm for the programme!

Training – is essential, and should be done in vivo with both members of the pair present via verbal, visual and written information-giving (bi-lingual if necessary) coupled with a demonstration, immediate

practice, feedback, further coaching and subsequent monitoring. Training individual pairs is very costly, and well organised group training is as effective while also serving to develop group support and solidarity. You may need specially pre-selected materials or equipment for the training meeting.

Contracting – Specify an initial trial period and be very clear about the time costs for the pair should they participate. Remember little and often will be most effective, especially with tutees with learning difficulties. Expect pairs to clearly contract in to participation, which is of course voluntary but needs to be seen as total and not optionally partial. Ensure there is mutual feedback about effectiveness and proposed improvements by the end of the trial period. Discuss continuation options and seek contract renewal, possibly in a range of formats, by participants. At this point pairs should be increasingly confident and capable of devising their own adaptations and creating their own novelty, and should be increasingly ambitious.

Monitoring – Emphasise self-checking. Some simple form of self- recording is desirable, and both members of the pair should participate in this. Periodic checking of these records by the co- ordinating professional is a minimal form of accountability of high cost-effectiveness. This may need to be supplemented in at least some cases by verbal enquiry of one or both members of the pair and/or direct observation of the pair (and preferably other supplementary tutors) in action, either in school or at their home, in the first case either on an individual basis or in a group setting.

Turning from monitoring the process of tutoring to evaluating its products or outcomes, be clear as to the objectives of evaluation, since there is little point in doing it for its own sake – what are you going to **do** with the results? Feeding back to the participants data on their success might increase their motivation. Publicising the data might expand subsequent recruitment or attract additional funding. How should you review to what extent the curriculum content of the tutoring has actually been mastered and retained in the longer term? Criterion-referenced tests closely allied to the tutoring process are likely to give the most valid (and most impressive) results, but a norm-referenced test in the same general area is a more stringent test of generalisation of skills acquired through tutoring and might be construed as more "objective" by outsiders. You might also solicit subjective feedback from the participants on a consumer satisfaction basis, but design any questionnaire carefully to ask very specific questions and avoid inbuilt positive bias, since in any case you will benefit from the "grateful testimonials" effect. Also remember to make it easy to score and summarise! Comparison or control groups are great if you can get them. Do try and save a little spare energy to collect longer term follow-up data on at least a sub-sample, to check on wash-out of gains. However, also ensure the evaluation procedure does not overwhelm or stress the participants – or indeed yourself!

Generalisation and maintenance – you will need to build in means for continuing review, feedback and injection of further novelty and enthusiasm if pairs are to keep going and maintain the use of their skills. Again, the social dynamic of the group is important. You are likely also to need to consciously foster their broadening the use of these skills to different materials and contexts for new purposes – all of this will consolidate the progress made, build confidence and empower the pair still further. When pairs have developed sufficient awareness of effective tutoring to begin to design their own systems, you know you have done a good job. As tutees themselves recruit a wider range of tutors, the tutee becomes even more central as quality controller of the tutoring process.

Wider alternatives

Of course, some families will remain unreachable, at least for now. Paradoxically, a school operating a successful family literacy programme can place the most disadvantaged children who are left out in a still worse position relative to their peers who are participating in the programme. In this situation, many teachers feel compelled to arrange alternative extra support for the most needy non- participant children, perhaps via volunteer adults coming into school or by giving up their own recess times to act as surrogate parents. Where any non-professionals are deployed as tutors, all the engineering considerations listed above apply. However, the organisational complexity of fixing up a reliable rota of substitute parents who are available often enough to actually make a difference to the child's attainment should not be underestimated.

Why not use the human resource ready at hand – other children? Peer tutoring has come a long way from the old-fashioned ways of doing it, and well-engineered systems for tutoring by non-professionals are often highly suitable for peer tutoring with only minor modification. If appropriate methods are deployed, both tutees **and tutors** gain in attainment – the tutors "learning by teaching". Further guidance on organising peer tutoring successfully will be found in Topping (1988).

We have focused on literacy here, and this is indeed an excellent place to start, but the possibilities are endless. A great deal of work has been done on parent and peer tutoring of mathematics, considerable attention has been paid to systems for developing tutee oracy, and interest is spreading rapidly into other areas of the curriculum such as Science (see, for example, the Paired Science pack by Croft & Topping, 1992). Once you are practised with the basic principles of engineering systems for non-professional tutoring, there is nowhere you cannot boldly go!

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Note

The *Paired Reading* and *Paired Learning Bulletins* are available on microfiche from ERIC (1985 ED285124, 1986 ED285125, 1987 ED285126, 1988 ED298429, 1989 ED313656 , as is the *Ryedale Paired Reading Adult Literacy Training Pack* (ED290845). A Teacher's Manual and NTSC training video titled *Paired Reading: Positive Reading Practice* is available from the North Alberta Reading Specialists' Council, Box 9538, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5X2, Canada. Details about the *Paired Science Pack* are available from the author at Centre for Paired Learning, Department of Psychology, University of Dundee, Scotland DD1 4HN.

A typology of family and intergenerational literacy programmes: implications for evaluation

Ruth S. Nickse

Dr Ruth Nickse has had a key role in developing theory and practice in family literacy work in the United States. When she was based at Boston University she founded the Family Learning Centre, an urban storefront intergenerational literacy centre and Collaborations for Literacy, a model college work-study intergenerational literacy tutoring programme. She has published an authoritative study on family literacy work, and is currently involved in the evaluation of the federal Even Start programme.

Introduction

Family and intergenerational programmes are an exciting new idea in the delivery of literacy services to adults and children. It is estimated that there are more than 500 programmes in existence across the United States, sponsored by federal and state governments, foundations, agencies, organisations, and increasingly, corporations. In terms of research and evaluation work is at an early stage. With the proliferation and variety of programmes, it is difficult to identify and classify them – their titles can be misleading. Projects that call themselves "family" or "intergenerational" programmes may not in fact, provide literacy services to the whole family, or across generations. For programme design, implementation, assessment, and evaluation purposes, it is important to be able to distinguish programmes from one another.

This paper offers a typology to identify and classify programmes by key components, and offers examples of each type. A typology is useful for practitioners, researchers, and policy makers. It helps in planning programmes, in discussing them, and in training staff. Its use enables a clearer picture of the availability of community services for literacy development, increases collaboration, and reduces redundancy in services. Since there are many ways to increase levels of literacy for individuals, families, and communities, no single model is necessarily better than another.

The four generic programme types offered have different programme goals and characteristics. Each lends itself to forms of evaluation. The paper describes a framework for decisions about evaluation with suggestions for domains of measurement that may be appropriate for four generic types.

Purpose

Increasingly, family and intergenerational literacy programmes are implemented as mechanisms purported to "break the cycle of illiteracy" which continues to affect undereducated and educationally disadvantaged families across the States. Programme efforts are sponsored by both public and private organisations, with more than 500 such programmes thought to be in operation. To date, theoretical and conceptual efforts lag behind practice. This paper presents four generic types of family/intergenerational literacy projects and describes key components of each. A framework for evaluation is presented with suggestions for measurement domains for each programme type.

This schema may be helpful in clearing away some of the mystique surrounding evaluation of these programmes at the local level. Its purpose is to provide a framework for programme staff to think through appropriate and realistic evaluation strategies for specific types of family and intergenerational literacy programmes.

Background

There is but modest evidence to date that family and intergenerational literacy programmes work (Nickse, 1990b; Sticht, 1989). The most comprehensive evaluation underway at present is that of Even Start, sponsored by the US Department of Education. Details of this national evaluation are described elsewhere (Nickse, 1990); a report to Congress is due in 1993. Yet sponsors are committing funds to this appealing approach in hope that it will help ameliorate persistent illiteracy.

Federal legislation is the primary source of support for programmes. These include the Adult Education Act (Titles II and III); the Library and Construction Act (Titles I and VI); the Head Start Act; the Family Support Act of 1988 (TitleIV-A); and several programmes in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act: Chapter I, Even Start; Title VII Bilingual Education; and Title III, Part B, the Family School Partnership Programme. States are a source of funding and a pioneer is Kentucky, with its Parent and Child Education programme (PACE).

The private sector also funds family and intergenerational literacy programmes. Corporations pilot programmes (e.g., Stride Rite, Nissan, Chrysler)

and Unions, too (e.g., Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, Sheet Metal Workers, the UAW/GM Training Centres).

Organisations and community-based agencies implement programmes, including Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), and Ser, Inc., a national Hispanic organisation. Volunteer literacy organisations have been awarded funding including Literacy Volunteers of America and Laubach Literacy. Foundations have taken leadership, including the Mac Arthur Foundation. The new Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy supports 10 programmes nationally; the Kenan Family Trust supports programmes in Kentucky and North Carolina, and also a new Centre for Family Literacy in Louisville. Toyota has just given this Centre $2 million to expand its more than 100 programmes which are already operating in 27 states.

The largest demonstration of family and intergenerational literacy programmes is sponsored by the US Department of Education. Even Start, as it is titled, funds 122 programmes as money is available (this years' funding is $48 million). It is expected that, in the future, Even Start will become a state-administered programme.

How well founded are these investments, in a time of budget constraints at the local, state, and national level? With so many jumping on board the family literacy bandwagon, is this a signal that another educational fad is aborning, or a significant new step in literacy service? Again, there is little evidence to date of programme effectiveness because programmes are new, some are unused to summative evaluation, and many are unable to afford evaluations even if the need was recognised.

Besides a lack of evidence that programmes work, there is also a strange mix of titles and names given to there literacy services which confuse, rather than describe, programmes. Some label themselves as "family" literacy programmes but serve mostly mothers (not fathers); others serve mothers without kids present any or all of the time; still others use foster grandparents to read to neighbourhood kids. So, what is a "family" and what is an "intergenerational" literacy project? Is there really any difference? Why should it matter what a programme is called?

The following Typology (Table 1) helps to distinguish one type from the other. It has proved useful in identifying critical differences between programme types. It helps in defining programme goals and expectations, and is thus useful in planning for their evaluation.

A typology for family and intergenerational literacy programmes

Adoption of a classification system or typology can clarify programme components by describing key characteristics. A typology is useful for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers – it helps in planning programmes, in discussing them, and in training staff. It can be used to inventory literacy projects as a step in community needs assessment to identify and classify services, helping to avoid costly redundancies (Nickse, 1990a,b).

Of course, there are limitations to any typology – it tends to simplify phenomena, which is both a strength and weakness. There are programme examples of mixed model types, and there is variation within each type. For example, Even Start programmes may all be called "family" literacy programmes (Type 1) even though there is great variation among the programmes themselves. Further, no single model or type is necessarily better than another, assuming a needs assessment has preceded the design of the programme and influences the practice. There are many avenues within communities to improved literacy for adults and children.

TABLE 1

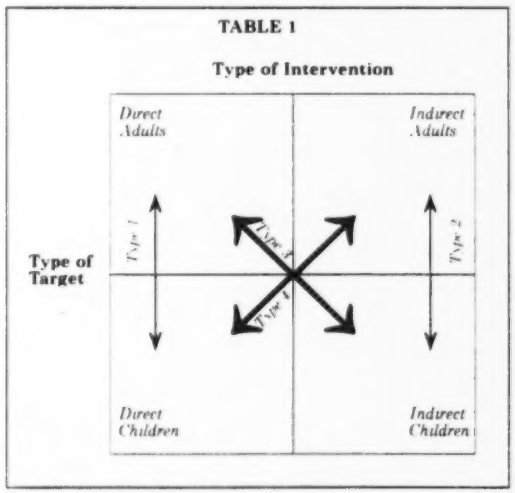

Table 1: *Type of intervention, from Nickse, R.S. (1990)*

Key questions in using the Typology include these: who is the target population to be served? Are the adult and child both present together for literacy development any or all of the time? Is the "family" component abstract (indirect) or concrete (direct)? As an example, parent groups at a worksite learning hypothetically about reading to children with peer practice constitutes an indirect component – children and adults reading together constitutes a direct component.

Another key characteristic is that of the relationships of the participants. Are the adults reading to the children also their parents or caretakers? If so, the programme has at least one element of a "family" programme because the participants are related. Are the adults reading to the children senior citizens from a neighbouring care facility or from a foster grandparents programme, working as volunteers? This is more properly an "intergenerational" programme as individuals are not related. In Type 1 programmes, the adults and children are related, in Type 2 programmes, they may not be. Obviously, a programme with parent/child activities is both a "family" programme and an intergenerational one.

Each programme type has both primary and

TABLE 2

Typology for Family and Intergenerational Literacy Programmes

Type	*Examples of Features*	*Examples of Concerns*	*Examples*
Type 1 Parent/ Child	Goal is positive, long-term family intervention ● parent-child; parent; child; activities ● intense, frequent participation ● highly structured; formal instruction ● integrated curriculum ● direct instruction; dual curriculum ● [illegible] staff team ● monitored attendance ● dedicated site ● long-term intervention	● high time commitment necessary ● retention in programme ● facilities [illegible] together ● transportation for families ● child care for infants, toddlers ● high degree of collaboration ● substantial costs to initiate and maintain	● Parental Child Education [illegible] ● Kenan Trust [illegible], 27 states ● Even Start Programmes
Type 2 Adult/ Child	Goal is supplementary, for skill building and enjoyment ● non-related adults and children ● lower level of intensity, participation ● less structured; more informal ● weekends, after school programmes ● collaborations (none to many) ● adapted sites ● short-term intervention	● no formal, sustained literacy instruction ● less intensive participation ● less parent-child interaction ● part-time staffing ● short-term programmes ● costs to initiate and maintain	● Family Intergenerational English Literacy [illegible] ● Stride Rite [illegible] ● Martin County Library [illegible] ● Carnegie Library [illegible] ● Nissan [illegible]
Type 3 Adult Alone	Goal is parent education ● parents/adults alone – children present infrequently, or not at all ● workshop formats; low intensity ● peer instruction and practise ● "portable" curriculum ● parent networking ● short-term intervention	● no supervised parent child interaction ● part-time staffing; consultants ● parent reports of programmes' success ● developmentally inappropriate activities may be used by parents ● costs to initiate and maintain	● Parents Reading Programme [illegible], plus ● Linking Home and Work [illegible], plus ● Family English Literacy Programmes
Type 4 Child Alone	Goal is supplementary school related literacy improvement for children ● school-based children, at-home parents ● school-linked programme ● teacher supervised ● take-home materials for children ● short-term intervention	● parents receive no literacy instruction for themselves ● parent may not provide support at home for child ● parent may not participate in workshops, rallies	● Chrysler Corp [illegible] ● Books and Beyond [illegible] ● Literacy Curriculum Connection [illegible]

Table 2: *A Summary of Features, from Nickse, R.S. 1989a)*

secondary beneficiaries. For example, a Type 3 programme for parents may indirectly benefit the children in that family, although they do not attend the programme. Type 4 programmes for children may indirectly benefit their parents. Types 1 and 2 benefit both adults and children, but to a different degree.

Which type of programme is best for which type of participants is a research question yet to be answered.

Features of Generic Types 1, 2, 3, 4

The targeted populations who participate in programmes, whether Type 1, 2, 3 or 4, receive different types of services which vary in a number of features. Table 2 summarises these for programme Types 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Chief differences are programme goals, the duration and frequency of services, and the target beneficiaries of the programme. The intensity of participation in the programme, the amount and nature of contact (whether direct or indirect) and the opportunity to interact and practice new learnings varies. Many Type 3 and 4 are short-term supplementary programmes, while Type 1 programmes are more likely to require long-term participation. Type 2 programmes can be organised over longer time periods but the hours of contact during a given time period may be brief, as in weekly two-hour tutoring sessions for adults. The activities offered may be a series of events rather than an integrated curriculum.

The intended beneficiaries of the services also varies. Type 1 programmes recruit parents and their children; Type 2 programmes serve adults and children – in each, an adult/parent and a child are joint beneficiaries. Type 3 programmes, however, serve parents without their children; and Type 4 programmes serve children without their parents. Each has a secondary beneficiary: in the case of Type 3, the children benefit from parents' participation; in Type 4, the parents may benefit from the children's participation.

There are inherent difficulties in the evaluation and comparison of family and intergenerational literacy programmes due to their key features. Each generic type lends itself to some kind of evaluation, but the levels of sophistication differ. The Typology is a basis for asking questions about effectiveness. What measurement domains are appropriate for a Type 1 programme? Would these be appropriate for Types 2,3, or 4? One way to approach these questions is to explore possibilities using the characteristics of the four programme types, applied to a model which outlines a framework for evaluation.

Summary of evaluation plans for family literacy programmes

Recent work of the Illinois Literacy Resource Centre proposes an evaluation plan for family literacy programmes based on experiences in the evaluation of 22 programmes in Illinois (Literacy Resource Centre, 1990). The plan is a developmental evaluation framework and is the result of work done by the Centre, combining and extending that of Weiss (1988) and Jacobs (1988) in the evaluation of family education programmes.

Briefly, the framework includes five levels of

evaluation. According to Jacobs *"each requires greater effort at data collection and tabulation, increased precision in programme definition and a greater commitment to the evaluation process"*. Each level or tier also fulfils a different purpose, uses different data gathering techniques, and promises information for particular audiences. Although the tiers appear in sequence in Table 3, it is suggested by Jacobs that programmes use several tiers, moving from tier to tier (up and down) as appropriate, to document programme changes over time. The levels (tiers) of assessment are illustrated in Table 3 and short descriptions follow:

TABLE 3A
Levels of Evaluation Basic Research Questions

Level/Tier	*Purpose*	*Research Questions*
Level I	Pre-Implementation needs assessment	Is there a need for family intergenerational literacy services?
Level II	Accountability	Who are we serving, and what services are we providing?
Level III	Programme Clarification	How can we do a better job serving our programme participants?
Level IV	Participants' Progress	Are participants making progress?
Level V	Programme Impacts	What are the long-term effects of programme participation?

Table 3A: *Levels of Evaluation, adapted from Jacobs, F. (1988)*

Level I Pre-Implementation: Known commonly as "needs assessment" this tier answers the question "What is the problem?" Is there indeed, a need for service?

Level II Accountability: This is the programme utilisation level, and is a response to the question "Who are we serving, and what services are we providing?"

Level III Programme Clarification: This is the formative or process clarification tier. The guiding question is "How can we do a better job serving our participants?"

Level IV Progress: Measurement of short-term objectives answers the question "Are participants making progress?"

Level V Programme Impact: At this level, the programme is committed to an experimental or quasi-experimental approach to evaluate programme effects. The question is "What are the long-term effects of programme participation?"

When these levels of evaluation are applied to the four generic types of programmes, the possibilities for evaluation of Types 1-4 are apparent. Table 4 illustrates this point.

Theoretically, Type 1 programmes offer the most comprehensive possibilities for the richest data about

TABLE 3B
Summary of Evaluation Plan for Family Literacy Programmes

Purpose of Evaluation	*Audiences*	*Strategies/Tasks*	*Types of Data to Collect/Analyse*	*Dissemination of Findings*	*Programme Planning*
LEVEL I - Needs Assessment (Preimplimentation) To document the need for services	Funding agencies, citizens, potential participants	Define target population, describe services and benefits	Local demographics, review press coverage, interviews, quantitative/quantitative	Summary report of key findings to agencies, community leaders, press	Change of programme plan on results of needs assessment
LEVEL II - Accountability (Programme Documentation) To determine who is receiving services and what services are provided	Funding agencies, programme providers, participants	Determine number of individuals served, portion of population served, what services are used	Count individuals being served, collect and examine data on participant characteristics, review case records of service usage	Formal presentations to staff, funding agencies, press	If targeted population not served, change or recruiting
LEVEL III - Formative Evaluation (Programme Clarification) To improve services to participants	Staff members, programme participants, funding agencies, other programme providers	Determine participant satisfaction	Develop questionnaires regarding client satisfaction, personal interviews, phone calls	Staff meetings, participant meetings	Change services based on results
LEVEL IV - Programme Progress (Progress toward Objectives) To determine if participants are making progress	Funding agencies, community, programme providers, external review committee	Document participant progress	Construct surveys, content analyses of programme records, standardised instruments, interviews	Formal report, presentations at local, state, and national conferences	Modify evaluation to better represent client progress
LEVEL V - Programme Impact To determine long-term effects of programme participation	Programme providers, participants, external reviewers	Determine best treatment effects, long-term effects	Collect longitudinal data on changes in participants, compare the effects of different treatments	To programme providers, local, state, federal agencies, researchers	Recommend specific treatment for greater impact

Table 3B: *Summary of Evaluation Plan for Family Literacy Programmes, from Illinois Literacy Resource Centre (1990)*

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TABLE 4

Type of Programme	*Need's Assessment Level 1*	*Account-ability Level 2*	*Process Clarification Level 3*	*Participant Progress Level 4*	*Programme Impact Level 5*
Type 1 Parent Child Together	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Type 2 Adult Child Together	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Not likely
Type 3 Parent Alone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Not likely
Type 4 Child Alone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Not likely

Table 4: *Possibilities for Evaluation of Programme Types 1-4 at Five Levels.*

family literacy programmes, because all five levels of evaluation are possible to implement, given the resources, willingness, and commitment to document a programme with this precision. The Even Start national evaluation, sponsored by the US Department of Education and contracted to Abt Associates Inc. of Cambridge, Massachusetts, with RMC Research, Portland, Oregon, is an example of the use of Level 5 evaluation for family literacy programmes.

Type 2 programmes are less comprehensive, and may be more suitable for evaluation at Levels 1-3 because of their briefer duration and less intense participation. Similarly, Type 3 programmes, because they serve parents only, lack detailed data on impacts on children, who are secondary beneficiaries of this programme type; Type 4 programmes, because they do not involve parents in literacy instruction for their own sake, do not provide rigorous data for evaluating changes in parents' own literacy skills or on parent/child interactions.

There is no implication here that evaluating a programme less than completely (using Levels 1-5) is "less good" – rather, each generic programme type presents opportunities for documenting some programme information. There is something to be learned from evaluation at each level, and within each programme type, as long as the programme goals, outcomes, and characteristics are tuned to the purposes of the evaluation, and it is carefully conducted.

The content (or domains) for measurement, also might be selected to "match" the characteristics of the evaluation level and the programme type. Some suggestions follow in the next section. Participant families should be involved in programme design early to co-determine desirable outcomes with staff.

Some suggested domains for measurement

Depending on the programme type, measurement domains can be identified at the programme and participant levels.

Programme level

Programme design/context. This domain describes the plan or design of the programme, e.g., the target population; the community setting; and the types of core and support services planned for or provided.

Programme implementation/processes/inputs. This domain includes descriptions of the programme once it is implemented or operational, and might describe these features, e.g. the programme resources including staff and funding; the programme processes of recruitment, instruction, and selection of materials; attendance and participation strategies; retention strategies; staff development and in-service training agendas; the types of services which support the programme such as transportation and child care; workshops or activities for parents; and assessment, particularly measures of participant satisfaction with the programme.

Programme outcomes. Programme effects are the short and long-term impacts and outcomes that the programme expects, e.g. outcomes of participant progress such as the literacy development of adults and children; increases in educational skills and expectations; changes in behaviours, skills and attitudes at the individual, family, and community level; and increases in personal skills and community involvement for adults. For children, outcomes are often expected to be better preparation for school, or better performance in school settings. Clearly, the overall objectives of programmes should be helping families to better help themselves and others. Increased literacy is only one of the components of programmes which assists families toward this goal.

Participant level

At the participant level, there are several possibilities for data collection:

Demographic information. Demographic information describes participants clearly: data on ethnicity; sex; ages; relationships of participants to each other; prior educational levels of the family and its extended members; job experiences and employment information; and data about the context of the families' lives in their communities.

Literacy skills, environments, and attitudes. This content domain might include: knowledge about children's emergent literacy; the development of literacy in adults/parents and in the family; the uses of literacy at home; the uses of literacy in pre-school or school programmes; access to literacy materials and literacy events at home and in pre-school or school settings; attitudes and values about education and schooling; and aspirations and expectations about literacy held by individuals, families, and their communities.

Parent/child interactions. This domain might evaluate the interactions between adult/parent and child. This is a relatively difficult area for data gathering because it is complex and because it lacks a variety of instruments for use. The domain might include parent teaching strategies, attitudes, values, and behaviours around the concept of the "parent-as-teacher"; "the climate" of parent/child relationships and their context; and specific literacy efforts, such as parent/child storybook reading or other evidence of improved parent/child literacy interactions, including mutual enjoyment.

Child personal characteristics/achievements. Characteristics of the child might include cognitive and linguistic development, psychomotor and social development, and emergent literacy concepts. Achievements might indicate growth in this area.

Parent personal characteristics/achievements. Here, evaluation might explore the parents as individuals, apart but connected to, their roles as parents: for example, parent/learners' sense of self-esteem; their feelings of well-being and personal efficacy; measures of social isolation and maternal depression; and other factors such as locus of control. Achievements might indicate growth in this area. Caution and restraint should guide explorations in these areas since there is a tension between gathering useful information for programme effectiveness and invasion of family privacy, a point to consider in the next domain areas also.

Family characteristics, support and resources. Family characteristics, support and resources might include the psychological, economic, and social factors which impinge on families in programmes, and measures of coping. While not all participants in programmes are "at risk" families a proportion of programmes do work with them, for example, Kenan, PACE and the Even Start programmes. Levels of family stress; types of daily hassles; sources of social support; access to resources; and conditions of families' home environments and communities are part of the context in which families exist. Since they are part of the gestalt within which families live and interact, this data is useful in tailoring programmes to participants' needs.

Parenting behaviours and attitudes. An intent of many families and intergenerational literacy programmes is to guide families toward successful child-rearing practices. Thus, concepts about child and adult development, attitudes about parenting and discipline, management of family matters, and aspirations and expectations for parenting are a part of this broad domain. Changes in parenting behaviours and attitudes as they are involved in the support of literacy development might be considered important to evaluate.

Choices and more choices

The content areas noted above are suggested as possibilities and are certainly not exhaustive. The question is, which domains might be evaluated in each generic type? Table 5 illustrates some suggestions for data collection. It is based on data from the programmes cited in Table 2 as examples of each generic type. It is not a statement that these levels of evaluation are actually being used. Rather, it is a hypothetical example of what seems possible, using the schema presented here to evaluate "family" and "intergenerational" literacy programmes.

Both formal and informal measures are desirable in the evaluation of family and intergenerational literacy programmes because of their complex nature and the multiple outcomes expected for each generic type.

As Table 5 illustrates, Type 1 programmes offer the best opportunity to evaluate outcomes over a long period of time. Changes in participants' on a variety of variables is possible with these intense, long-term programmes. Evaluation at each of the Levels 1-5 contributes to knowledge about the effects of family literacy programmes on parents and children. This is the kind of evaluation that members of Congress and

TABLE 5

Generic Type	*Need's Assessment Level 1*	*Accountability Level 2*	*Process Clarification Level 3*	*Participant Progress Level 4*	*Programme Impact Level 5*
Type 1 Parent Child Family Literacy	● demographic information ● programme design context	● implementation, process and inputs ● family characteristics, support, resources ● parenting behaviours, attitudes	● participant satisfaction ● parent personal characteristics ● child personal characteristics	● short term effects ● literacy skills, environments, attitudes, behaviour	● programme outcomes ● long term effects – parent child interactions – literacy skills, attitudes, behaviour ● parenting behaviours and attitudes – parent's personal characteristics – family characteristics – parent child achievements – children's achievements
Type 2 Adult Child Intergenerational Literacy	● demographic information ● programme design context	● implementation, process and inputs	● participant satisfaction	Maybe	No
Type 3 Adult Alone Parent Literacy	● demographic information ● programme design context	● implementation, process and inputs ● family characteristics, support, resources ● parenting behaviours, attitudes	● participant satisfaction	Maybe	No
Type 4 Child Alone Child Literacy	● demographic information ● programme design context	● implementation, process and inputs	● participant satisfaction	Maybe	No

Table 5: *Suggested Measurement Domains for Family Literacy Programme Types 1-4*

other policy makers want and need to make judgements about institutionalisation of programmes. Evaluations are often multiyear studies, using random assignment, comparison groups, or other standards. They are usually externally directed (as in the case of Even Start) and are expensive to conduct. A professional group customarily undertakes evaluations at Level 5 with the cooperation of the local programmes.

Programme Types 2,3, and 4 can provide information on programme design and context, on implementation processes and inputs, and on participant satisfaction (Levels 1, 2, and 3). Valuable information is gathered which result in services better tailored to participants. Effective programmes are internally reflective, with staff sensitive to nuances in programme climate. This orientation is necessary, and calls for a certain fluidity of response from staff. Constant tinkering and adjustment through successive approximation leads to programme refinement and toward better services in Level 3 evaluations. This is an appropriate goal in and of itself. Without this knowledge, programmes may fail to thrive since it is doubtful the services provided truly fit participants' needs: on which participants' satisfaction is based.

Whether Types 2,3, and 4 are able to gather information at Level 4 depends on several factors: the duration, frequency and intensity of services; staff experience with evaluation techniques; funding levels; and especially, time. Rich anecdotal information is available at Levels 2-4 (and also at Level 5). The programme staffs' willingness to incorporate more objective measurement means more real time in record keeping. Documentation burdens increase, and it is not unusual that staff resent taking time away from providing direct services to keep records. With shortages of personnel and individuals employed part-time in service delivery, staff may decide that evaluation at Levels 1-3 are sufficient for the audiences they must or wish to, satisfy. However, the challenge to gather data for Level 4 evaluations might be considered at some later date in the programmes' life.

Programmes that choose to proceed to Level 4 might benefit from the advice of an external, local evaluator who can form a collaboration with the staff. If programme replication is an objective, evaluators can suggest strategies for data collection that seem feasible and appropriate, and help prepare the reports which are shared with outside audiences. The knowledge base about this fascinating approach to literacy improvement will grow with careful and appropriate evaluations.

Conclusions

Evaluating family interactions and the multiple effects on adults and children tests beyond the existing repertoire of techniques (Weiss and Jacobs, 1988). What is needed is a new battery of instruments and some new approaches to capture the unique effects of family and intergenerational literacy programmes.

Family literacy practice is largely uncharted territory, and there will be false starts and misleading data. However, without comprehensive data, we will not know whether this is truly a new and significant step in literacy services, or just another complicated educational fad. The danger is that policy decisions will be made prematurely based on poor evaluation information; especially a concern when expectations for success are so high. A second danger is that, in a quest for data, programmes distort their services or frighten away the very participants for whom services are developed. The message to staff is, use judgement when planning evaluation strategies, and tailor the strategies to the programme type. At the evaluation level that is appropriate and feasible, do a careful job of data collection: this strategy is defensible. Do not burden an effective part-time programme with ambitious evaluations that are not possible to do well, which distort or modify the programme unduly, or which might result in a driving participants away, which is particularly possible when they have had no voice in the evaluation plan.

The suggestions proposed in this paper may guide local programmes to more satisfactory evaluation procedures which are feasible and appropriate for different programme types. If so, the author, who has had many sleepless nights worrying about evaluation in a family and intergenerational literacy programme, will sleep more soundly herself!

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